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# INSIDE RED RUSSIA

The author saw Russia as an Australian Labour man officially visiting a supposed Socialist State, and he returned to Australia horrified at the regimentation of an entire nation, enslaved by their Soviet Rulers. A frank record of an appalling System.

BY J.J. MALCOLM



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# *Inside* **RED** *Russia*

By

**J. J. MALONEY, M.L.C.**

Former Australian Minister to Moscow

**ANGUS AND ROBERTSON**

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## NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

THE author of this book, the Hon. J. J. Maloney, is a member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales. He is a Labour leader, occupying an important position in the Australian Trade Union movement.

In 1943 he was asked by the Commonwealth Government to become the Australian Minister to Moscow, a post he filled for two years.

This book is the story of Mr Maloney's visit to the Soviet. It is also a frank record of an appalling system, as he saw it. He saw Russia, let it be remembered, as a Labour man officially visiting a supposed Socialist State, and he returned to Australia horrified at the regimentation of an entire nation enslaved by its Soviet rulers.

Mr Maloney pulls no punches, hides nothing, reveals with almost brutal candour the things he saw and experienced. He met all the Russian heads, from Stalin down, and he had unique opportunities of examining the Russian Socialist system. His Labour training enabled him to assess Russian Labour conditions at their true value.

He started in Labour affairs at fifteen years of age, and became, firstly, Secretary of the New South Wales Boot Trade Union in 1932; later he was Secretary of the Australian Boot Trade Employees' Federation—the Commonwealth-wide body. He entered the Legislative Council in 1941, and was re-elected in 1943 for a further twelve years.

For the three years prior to going to Moscow Mr Maloney was President of the New South Wales Trades and Labour Council—the State's top Labour organization. He was at the same time an executive officer of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Labour's head Federal unit.

With his background in the Australian workers' movement, Mr Maloney took a great deal of experience with him to Russia.

He came back more than ever convinced that the salvation of Labour is not in a system that has reduced Russian workers to modern serfdom. Mr Maloney prizes the democracy which is the



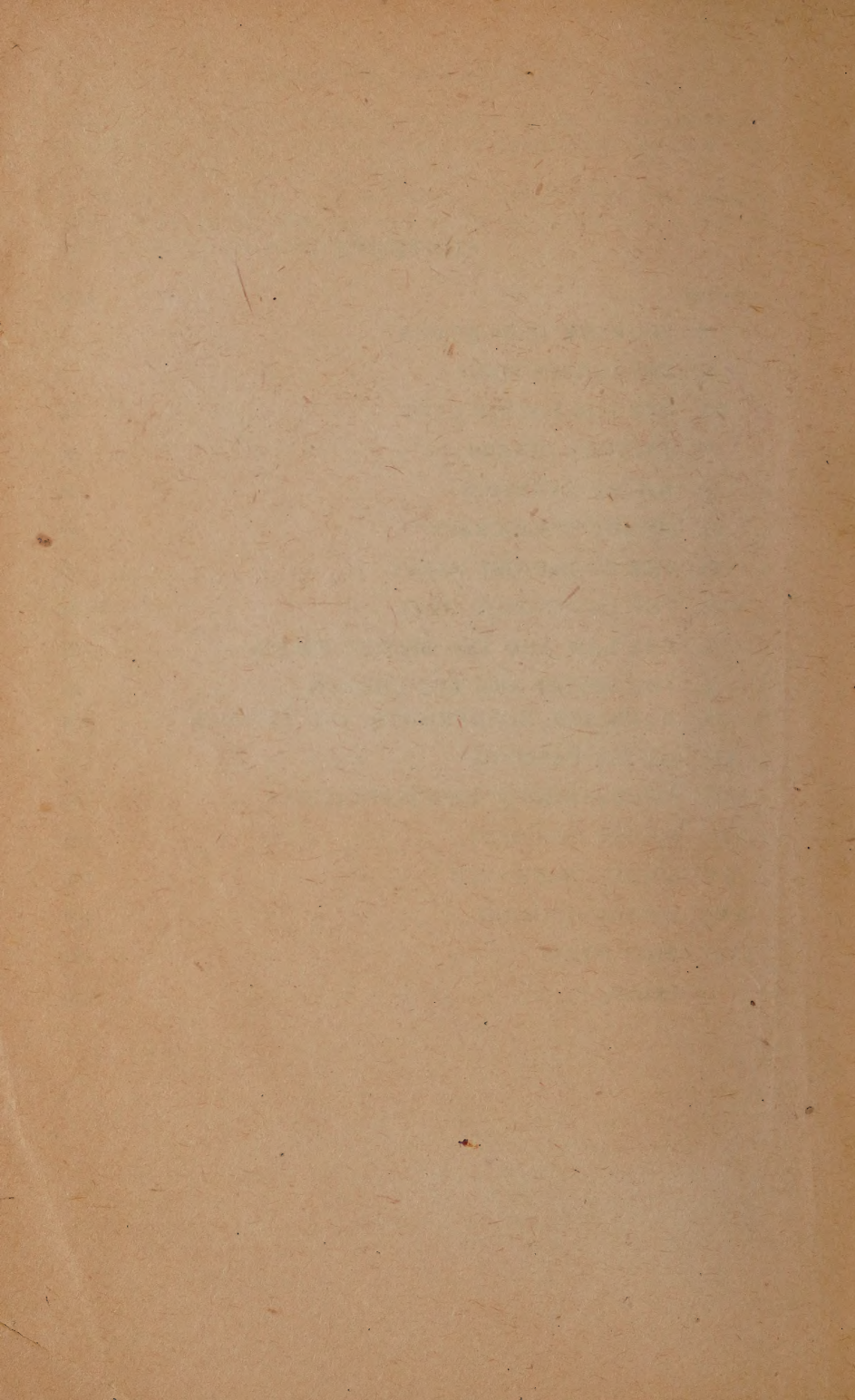
aim of all responsible Labour men, and a Trades Union movement which works for the worker, instead of disciplining him as do the so-called Trade Unions of the Soviet.

*Inside Red Russia* is a revelation. That Mr Maloney adduces many of his proofs from speeches by Soviet leaders adds a piquant interest to this devastating exposé.

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## CHAPTER I

### JOURNEY INTO RUSSIA

LEAVING Australia on 6 December 1943 to take up the post of Australian Minister to the U.S.S.R. proved to be the beginning of one of the most interesting periods of my life.

For many years I had been reading about the Soviet Union from the vast amount of literature available on that country—favourable and unfavourable—in an attempt to satisfy myself as to the conditions of the Soviet people.

I had spoken with workers who had been to the Soviet Union in delegations on occasions such as May Day, or who had studied in that country for as long as two years. I had also spoken with former Soviet citizens who had, by one means or another, left the U.S.S.R. at a time when it was possible for a Soviet citizen to do so. They gave me much valuable information about Russia.

At best, all this reading and discussion was very confusing. While I had my own opinions about the political control of the Soviet Union, there still remained many reported accomplishments of that country which I wished to investigate.

I still had vivid recollections of the depression years in Australia between 1929 and 1932—years during which my wife and I struggled to maintain ourselves and our four young children without having to resort to the Government dole.

The Soviet Union, it appeared from my reading, had undoubtedly solved the problem of unemployment. No longer was there any necessity for an able-bodied person to be without work in that country. The Government provided adequate pensions for those who were unable to work because of old age or illness.

As far as I knew the only other countries where unemployment, as such, had been abolished were Germany under National Socialism and Italy under Fascism. But the price paid by the workers of those countries for full employment was, to my humble mind, far too great. Therefore I looked forward to examining the methods adopted in the Soviet Union.

I felt confident that in the U.S.S.R. I would learn much about social, educational, and industrial conditions as they affect the workers. I also felt it was possible that whatever shortcomings I might find in the Soviet Union, there would be compensation in

the high standard of living, security of employment, and social service benefits which I believed to be available to all, to say nothing of the abolition of classes which would provide for a more equitable distribution of the wealth of the country.

At that particular time any matter connected with the Soviet Union was sufficient to make headlines in almost every section of the world Press.

The heroic defence of Stalingrad and Leningrad had won for the Red Army and the people of the U.S.S.R. the admiration of the whole world. Day after day stirring dispatches from Russia by foreign Press correspondents told of new victories by the Red Army, and these dispatches left a mental picture of new heights to which the army and people of the Soviet Union were rising. And here I was on my way to the very nerve centre of that country.

As well as performing the duties required of me as Australian Minister to Russia, I hoped that I would find time to make an intensive study of conditions in the U.S.S.R. by visiting industrial undertakings and farms, and by travelling about as freely as possible, in order to see for myself the conditions under which the Soviet people worked and lived.

With thoughts such as these I landed at the Moscow airport on the afternoon of 23 December 1943. Between that date and the date of my departure from Moscow on 9 February 1946, I went through an experience that I would not have missed for any consideration—but also an experience that I would not care to go through again. It caused a complete readjustment of my former ideas of the U.S.S.R.

I had been of the opinion that the conditions of the people under National Socialism in Germany and Fascism in Italy were such that would not be tolerated in any country in the world where free Trade Unions existed to fight for, and protect, the interests of the workers; but I was to learn that the peoples of the Soviet Union differed from those under the iron heel of Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy only by race and the fact that the standard of living in the Soviet Union was much lower than it had been in either Germany or Italy.

I found that the iron heel of Fascism was no more brutal than the political heel of the dictatorship in the U.S.S.R. Freedoms that were denied in Germany were also denied to the people of the Soviet Union. The "Joy Through Youth" movement and the Labour Corps of Germany had their counterparts in the physical culture and Trade Union organizations of the Soviet Union.

I found that the Gestapo of Germany had its counterpart in the N.K.V.D. organization of the U.S.S.R., but I doubt very much whether the machinations of Hitler's Gestapo could compare with the N.K.V.D. of the Soviet Union when it came to throwing citizens

into prison labour camps or completely liquidating them for political reasons.

I found that when a high-ranking Soviet official speaks of "democracy" he means a system of society such as exists in the U.S.S.R.; when he speaks of having a "friendly neighbour" he means a State with a Government completely subservient to the dictates of the Kremlin; when he speaks of the "establishment of friendly relations with other countries" he means the recognition by those countries of the right of agents of the Soviet Union, through the various organizations of the Communist Party in those countries, to spread discord among the populace as well as false and misleading propaganda about conditions in the Soviet Union or about its international objective; when he refers to a person as a "Fascist", or uses the term "Fascist-like action" he means a person who attempts to lift aside the curtain of the U.S.S.R. and reveal some facts about happenings there, or a person who has the audacity to dispute the views expressed by the dictatorship of the U.S.S.R.

On the other hand, I found in the common people of the U.S.S.R. hospitable and lovable traits that no dictatorship could eliminate. They have gone through untold privations, both in peace and in war, and are destined to continue in that state while the present dictatorship controls their country.

These are the people who suffer in silence with no organization to help them or to speak for them. These are the people who have never heard of the four great principles of the Atlantic Charter to which Stalin subscribed at the Teheran Conference in 1943.

It is these people for whom no voice is raised at the Peace Conference or at other International Conferences. They are the innocent victims of the most ruthless political dictatorship the world has known—a dictatorship under which life—especially if it be aged or infirm—is the cheapest of all commodities.

We speak of the human rights of the people of the world but we stand idly by while such human rights are not only denied to the two hundred million people who comprise the population of the U.S.S.R. but are rapidly being filched from some two hundred million people of European States, portions of the Near East and of the Far East, all of whom are either directly or indirectly under the control and influence of the Soviet dictatorship.

We have witnessed the appeasement policy that has gradually strengthened the dictatorship of Stalin, until today he controls the lives and destinies of more than twice the number of human beings he controlled before 1939.

Not one Conference, from Teheran to Potsdam, has failed to give Stalin, by secret agreement, concessions over former European and Far Eastern States, concessions of which Stalin has hurriedly



taken advantage, with the result that more than two hundred million people are being Sovietized or liquidated if they raise objections to the decrees of the Great Stalin, either through his puppet Governments in the Balkans and Poland or his Military Command in Far Eastern territories.

It cannot be disputed that there have been great achievements in the building up of war industries in the Soviet Union. Nor can it be doubted that the price paid by Soviet citizens for this accomplishment is unparalleled in human history.

Hundreds of thousands of people from Soviet prison labour camps were employed in the construction of waterways and other large national undertakings. Women, boys, and girls were conscripted from all parts of the State and transported to the sites of these undertakings, where they were obliged to clear forests before building started, meanwhile being fed on very poor, low-grade rations, and having to find for themselves sleeping accommodation and other human necessities—in their leisure hours.

On my return to Australia I felt, and I still feel, that it was my duty to make known as widely as possible the conditions I found in the Soviet Union. I feel that the more fully people are informed of the true conditions in the U.S.S.R. the less likelihood there is that that system will be imposed on democratic countries.

I do not profess to give a complete picture of the Soviet Union in this book—that would be impossible. Nor do I claim to have examined every aspect of any particular subject—to do that I should require a volume for each subject.

My principal difficulty in writing about the Soviet Union lies, not in the lack of information, but in the choice, from the facts at my disposal, of those which will give the clearest picture in the fewest words.

The whole of the material in this book has been compiled from notes made while I was in the U.S.S.R., coupled with documentary matter taken from Soviet publications, decrees, orders, etc. which I acquired during my stay.

I have not attempted to deal fully with the international aspect of U.S.S.R. policy, not because I fail to appreciate the great danger to our way of life, but because I believe that at this stage my most important task is to correct the mistaken idea that the conditions of the workers in the Soviet Union are superior to those in any other country.

## CHAPTER II

### TOVARICH'S FOOD

#### *Food Scarcities*

DEMANDS made in the conduct of total war brought about food and clothes rationing in many countries, but I do not know of any country where rationing was as severe as in the U.S.S.R.

Like the Stalin Constitution, Stalin's interpretation of Socialism—"From each according to his ability, to each according to his work"—represents a stated principle at best, of which the common people have not had even the doubtful benefit.

Shortages of food have been evident in the U.S.S.R. since the Revolution, with few periods when good supplies were available. The most serious famines were those of 1920-22 and 1932. In the period after the 1920 famine the position improved with the introduction of the New Economic Plan, and it continued to improve until 1928, when the food position again began to deteriorate, ending in the famine of 1932. After that period conditions became better again and in 1935 food rationing was abolished. Then came the abolition of clothes rationing early in 1936, but this did not imply that food and clothing were plentiful commodities, for the Soviet citizen could make purchases only from the limited stocks available from time to time in the stores.

#### *The Golden Age*

The abolition of rationing in 1935-6, while giving the Soviet citizen the right to make his purchases where and when he could, and giving him a larger range and greater quantities of food than formerly, did not allow him to satisfy his requirements fully. I spoke to numerous people who lived through this period of Soviet non-rationing, and all had the same story to tell. They said the authorities had given this non-rationing period the title of "The Golden Age" and it was continually impressed on the people that they had the Communist Party and the Soviet Government to thank for this wonderful state of affairs wherein there was no unemployment or rationing.

According to these Soviet citizens it was possible to purchase most kinds of foodstuffs, but when it came to buying clothing the position

was different. They were free to buy clothes when available, but it was necessary to stand in queues. To have any chance of getting into a store and purchasing a garment, it was necessary to take one's place in the queue about 5 a.m., and, after waiting hours to gain admittance, one might find that the particular size of shoe or article of clothing sought was not available. It might take months of continual attendance at different shops before the required article was obtainable. This position certainly applies today to the special stores patronized by foreigners in Moscow.

With the outbreak of war, rationing came back again. Owing to the tremendous inroads made into U.S.S.R. territory by the German Army, food and clothing became very scarce. With the turn of the tide in the war, the food position began to improve, but up to the time I left Moscow (February 1946) I was not aware of one case in which a Soviet citizen had received from his registered shop the full amount of food shown on his ration card.

On the other hand, I did not hear of any city worker not receiving his full bread ration each month, although I have known many cases of the peasantry being short of bread. Among the peasantry near Moscow it was often possible to purchase handicraft articles provided one could make the purchase with bread or some other food. To offer to buy the articles with roubles generally resulted in a refusal to trade.

### *How to Get a Ration Card*

For the purpose of food rationing the people are divided into classes according to the nature of their employment. For all non-workers, such as the aged and infirm, school children, and wives, the ration is on a very low scale. For the general community the ration card is made out in six different classes, or "categories" as the Soviet authorities prefer to call them.

The issuing of food ration cards takes place monthly and any coupons not used at the end of the month lose their currency. A small charge is made for the food ration card each month, but the red tape that a citizen must wade through to obtain his card must cost considerably more than the money received from the people for their cards.

To obtain a ration card a worker must procure from his House Committee a card certifying that he is legally registered as a tenant of his particular apartment house, and the card must also give particulars of the holder and his tenancy. This card is then taken by the worker to his place of employment and submitted to the management, who certify on the card that the holder is employed in that establishment and state the nature of work he performs. The official stamp of his place of employment must be



imprinted on the card as well as the official stamp of the House Committee.

The worker then takes this certified card to the rationing authorities in his district and submits it with proof of his identity in the form of the official personal internal passport every citizen must carry.

After checking and entering particulars of the holder, the rationing authorities retain the certified card and give the worker his ration card, and the worker then takes it to his House Committee for certification and to have the official stamp imprinted on it. From there he takes it back to his place of employment and once again the management places on it the official stamp of the undertaking.

The next step is to take the certified ration card to a *gastronom* (food shop) to be registered as a person entitled to make his ration purchases at that particular shop. Having completed all these formalities, the worker is then free from further food ration card worries until the 22nd of the following month, when he must go through the same ritual once again.

Generally each *gastronom* sells meat, fish, milk, bread, groceries, etc., but there are *gastronom*s that sell one type of food only, such as bread, or fish, or milk, and so on. All *gastronom*s are known by numbers. As a rule the holder of a ration card may register at any *gastronom* he wishes, provided its supplies are sufficient to permit of his registration there.

There are, however, certain *gastronom*s reserved for special people with which no others can be registered as customers. Then there are other *gastronom*s at which such people as Vice-Commissars are registered and in which more and better quality foods are available, but it is rather difficult for the ordinary citizen to obtain registration at these shops. He does not have the choice of registering in such places, but must obtain special permission to do so from the rationing authorities.

One of these *gastronom*s was directed to register a number of employees as customers. These employees were advised through the rationing authorities that they could register at that particular *gastronom* and were told to take with them when they made application for registration a letter from their place of employment showing the nature of their work and other particulars. The employees concerned, on taking their letters to the shop, were informed by the director of the *gastronom* that he would be pleased to register them as customers, but would not like to enter them as described in the letters they had brought, for he had a number of Vice-Commissars registered on his books and if one of them should happen to look over his register and find that housemaids and *dvorniks* (rouseabouts, usefals, yardmen, and the like) were

also registered it might get him (the director) into trouble. If they would take the letters back to their employers and get another letter merely certifying that they were employed there and describing them as "employees" he would gladly register them. This was done and the housemaids and *dvorniks* duly registered along with the Vice-Commissars.

Registration with *gastronom*s is on a monthly basis and people may change from one *gastronom* to another from month to month. Since little, if any, advantage is to be gained by such transfers—except in the special cases referred to above—the registration is more or less stable.

Supplies from the *gastronom*s are distributed to the registered customers in periods of ten days (*decada*), that is, first to tenth, eleventh to twentieth, and twenty-first to the end of the month. If a person is required to leave the district in which he is registered with a *gastronom*, he can obtain from the director of the *gastronom* a certificate showing the number of *decada* bought by him at that shop and he is then entitled to register with a *gastronom* in the district to which he has been transferred for the remaining *decadas* shown on the certificate.

### *The People's Rations*

Having completed all rationing requirements, the Soviet citizen is now entitled to draw rations—when they are available—according to his position in the ration scale shown on the opposite page.

It will be seen that the requirements necessary to draw a food ration card are, firstly, legal registration in some particular place as a tenant, and—for all except the aged, infirm, children, and non-working wives—certification that the person is employed in a given establishment or undertaking. People who have deserted their place of employment, or the army, have no legal means of obtaining food cards and unless supported by friends or relatives are forced either to surrender themselves to the authorities, or to resort to crime in order to live.

### *The Crime Wave*

Since there are large numbers who, for one cause or another, are not entitled to food ration cards, the ration card of a Soviet citizen becomes a valuable document. During my stay in the U.S.S.R. the theft of food cards was growing more and more prevalent. I learned of numerous cases in which people—generally young girls and women—were waylaid in streets, along the dark corridors of their apartment houses, even in their rooms, and robbed of their ration cards and sometimes stripped of their clothing as well. This type of crime occurs most frequently during the long winter nights.



# SOVIET RATIONS (in Grammes)

Class of person	Per day	Per Month					
	Bread or 75% Flour	Meat	Fish	Butter	Sugar	Macaroni or Equivalent	Tea
1. Workman 1st category	1000	2500	1500	1000	800	2500	25
2. Workman 2nd category	750	2200	1500	800	500	2000	25
3. Workman 3rd category	550	2200	500	800	500	2000	25
4. Employees	450	1200	nil	400	300	1500	25
5. Adult non-workers	300	600	nil	200	200	1000	25
6. Children	300	600	nil	400	300	1200	25

Note. 1000 grammes = 1 kilogram. 1 kilogram = 2.21 lb.

During the three winters I spent in Moscow hardly a week passed without my seeing or hearing of one or more such cases; but until the winter of 1945 the authorities gave no publicity to these matters.

These violent robberies were reaching such a stage that the authorities could no longer ignore the publicity value of the measures taken to stop them. The first indication that the authorities intended to make these crimes public came with an instruction issued by the Plenum of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. and published in *Pravda* during January 1945. Under it, Courts were instructed, when assessing the value of food cards stolen, to base their compensation on prices ruling on the open markets, since the owners of the stolen cards, "because of theft", were deprived of the possibility of obtaining the food at State prices.

This measure apparently had little effect upon those wishing to steal food coupons. With the winter of 1945-6 came a far greater crime wave than before. Street lighting, formerly extinguished at 1.30 a.m., was now kept on all night. The normal militia (police) force was supplemented by special Red Army men armed with tommy-guns, two men to a patrol, marching the city streets day and night. To avoid attack these patrol-men marched single file about three paces apart. Supplementing the Red Army patrol-men there were mounted armed men going round courtyards and back streets all night.

Despite all these precautions the local Press gave no publicity to the crime wave generally, although it did report two cases in December 1945. It was stated that one gang, armed with iron rods, attacked and robbed people in the streets on several occasions. This gang was caught and tried for the robberies, and the leader was shot. His colleagues received prison sentences ranging from three to eight years, after which they were to be sent to distant parts for a further period of five years. In November 1945 it was announced that two other men had robbed and killed their victims. They were arrested by the authorities and shot.

There were thousands of other cases of robbery with violence throughout that winter, many of the victims being killed outright. The Moscow Press gave no reports of such cases.

### *Class Rations*

Though the full rations shown on the ration book are rarely, if ever, available to the average ration card holder, some departures are made from the basic ration scale in favour of certain persons.

Workers' ration cards are issued to all manual and heavy workers, engineers, tram and train drivers and conductors, printers, actors, actresses, musicians, circus artists, writers, journalists, teachers, painters (art), factory managers, trust managers, and



those engaged in directorial or executive capacities in the numerous State enterprises.

Workers engaged in very heavy work such as engine drivers, or employees in rolling mills, receive 100 grammes of bread a day in addition to their ordinary ration.

Stakhanovites (people called after Alexei Stakhanov, a miner who achieved a wonderful record of efficiency and who established extraordinary output figures) receive from 20 per cent to 25 per cent above the basic ration of their particular categories.

People who render special services to the State—such as leading architects, leader-writers, noted authors, academicians, scientists, professors, surgeons, doctors, artists of the ballet, opera, musical comedy, or circus, who have been awarded State honours, and holders of certain senior Soviet orders—receive the workers' basic ration plus as much as three or four times the full workers' ration for themselves.

People in the first three ration groups occasionally receive an issue of sunflower seed (a popular food among the poorer classes—they chew it for its oil content), milk, coffee, kerosene, oil, and a quantity of wine or vodka. This special issue is made about once every three months.

"Employee" ration cards are given to non-manual workers and to those performing work other than on production.

"Adult non-worker" cards are given to all persons—other than the wives of members of the higher strata—who are aged, infirm, or totally incapacitated, and to wives who for some reason are unable to go out to work. Since there is compulsory labour in the U.S.S.R. very few wives would be in this group, and those who are would be mainly the aged or infirm. The ration scale for this group of people is the lowest of all in the ration groupings and their lot, if they are compelled to live entirely on these rations, is a very hard one indeed.

Undoubtedly the object of making this group's ration so low is to force all who would normally come under it, but who are still physically capable, to perform some kind of work. This is where the Soviet co-operative societies enter the picture.

Through these co-operative societies the old or infirm people are encouraged to take employment either in their own rooms or at places provided by the co-operatives. They are, of course, paid on a piece-work basis and are given weaving, knitting, mending, and similar work. The conditions under which the work is performed are the most primitive imaginable. However the fact that they are entitled to a higher food ration by so working encourages these people to continue.

*Beggars*

For the aged or infirm who have to rely solely on the "adult non-worker" ration card, the position is very difficult. Those without help from friends or relatives are forced to beg in order to live. Some of the sights I saw during my stay in Russia were heart-rending.

As a rule, beggars are kept away from the centre of the city by the authorities, but occasionally they will risk official wrath and enter forbidden areas. They are to be found mainly round the market places, on corners of busy thoroughfares, outside churches—those that are open—at railway stations, or on the railway lines. These beggars are usually aged or incapacitated people in various stages of deformity and poverty. Many of them have their regular daily stands at street corners, etc., where they may be seen in all weathers. They are to be found in swarms in the market places. They generally disappear from sight if there is a big function at the principal church in Moscow, but return after the function and carry on, unmolested.

The people of Moscow cannot spare any of their food for these beggars, but they are extraordinarily generous with their money, which is of various denominations of kopeks. There are 100 kopeks to the rouble and a large number are required to buy even the smallest amount of food, but this does not prevent the ordinary Russian citizen from giving alms generously.

Along the railway lines beggars are to be seen at every station. Here they are not all aged or infirm, and large numbers of children are amongst them. At one station I found a man begging and, on speaking to him, discovered that he spoke English, German, French, and Russian. He was about 47 years of age. When the Soviet annexed Lithuania in 1939, he was transported with his wife and four children from his home in Lithuania to Southern Russia. Although work was available, he said the food rations were so meagre that he was compelled to beg in order to save himself and his family from starvation.

This man's experience was not uncommon and there are large numbers of people transported from their homes in the Baltic States and Poland into remote parts of the U.S.S.R. who share the same fate. These conditions must be heartbreaking to people who have known better conditions, but it must be realized that their treatment is about the same as that of the citizens of the U.S.S.R.

*The Child's Lot*

The children's food ration cards provide greater quantities of certain rationed goods than the "adult non-worker" ration cards, but these foods are not always available in the *gastronomes*.



Children up to seven years of age, if attending children's community centres or daily hostels, receive a regular ration of milk, either natural or dried, depending upon the form that is available. The children attending the day hostels also receive some sweet-meats and biscuits, and occasionally some fruit.

Unfortunately the number of crèches and kindergartens is totally inadequate. Children of high officials, prominent Party members, Stakhanovites, and other fast workers in industry comprise the majority of the children in these institutions, whether they are attached to factories or to State enterprises.

The children of Red Army men have in theory, first preference in these institutions, but in reality some influence is needed to gain preference. A few privileged children of Red Army men may obtain this preference, but the majority receive no concessions. I know of some army families possessing not one item of real furniture. Old boxes serve as tables and the floor is the family's bed. These families have not received during the whole of the war period, any of the special privileges Red Army men's families are supposed to be entitled to.

#### *Rations for the Higher Strata*

Members of the Government, senior Soviet administrators, and other very high officials, together with the members of their families, receive the fullest and best rations in the Soviet Union. They want for nothing and do not have to worry whether or not a commodity will be available when they send for it. Their shopping places are exclusive to their class. Admittance is by special pass. A Director of one of these closed shops would soon find himself in serious trouble if he did not have on hand all the requirements of his customers.

Next come the senior officers of the Department of Internal Security (N.K.V.D.). These are the high officials of both sexes of the Soviet secret police organization, and they have their own exclusive closed shops in which they can purchase at special State prices all their requirements—commodities which are available to the general public, only in the open markets and commercial stores at fantastically high prices.

This organization has its own auxiliary farms and workshops, conducted with prison labour, to supply its own special stores, and, like their colleagues in the highest strata of Soviet officialdom, the members want for nothing in the way of food and comforts.

The men and women in the lower ranks of the N.K.V.D. receive the same food ration as the army.

With the exception of members of the Government, senior Soviet administrators, etc., and the high ranking officers of the N.K.V.D., the personnel of the army, especially officers in the field, get the highest and best food ration in the country.

High-ranking<sup>1</sup> Red Army officers receive all their rations free, and members of their families (limited to wife and one dependant) have the privilege of obtaining their food with the top worker's ration card in Red Army co-operative stores at specially reduced State prices. Should the officer be at home, then his food is delivered to him daily.

Officers of the Soviet militia (police), corresponding to the rank of Inspector and higher, are given a more generous ration than junior commissioned officers in the Red Army, and those in the lower ranks of the militia receive the same ration as the Red Army.

Heads of foreign missions and foreign Press correspondents receive rations amounting to about double those of a worker in the highest grade category. Members of the foreign diplomatic corps in the lower ranks receive a smaller ration than the heads of their missions, and the non-diplomatic members of a foreign mission receive a lower ration again than those with diplomatic status. These varying scales of rations are all higher than those of the Soviet worker in the highest grade category.

There are special closed shops for those holding foreigner's ration books. Food and general commodities may be purchased in these shops at special State prices. The stipulated foodstuffs on their ration cards are rarely available in full in their *gastronomes*, but the holders receive sufficient food all the same and enjoy a privileged position in the U.S.S.R. in respect of food and clothing supplies.



## CHAPTER III

### OFF THE RATION CARD

#### *Open Markets*

IN all towns and cities throughout the U.S.S.R. market places are established to which the peasantry bring their surplus commodities for disposal. Markets are also established at all railway stations where the peasantry sell goods to train travellers and local inhabitants.

The goods sold in these market places are not rationed goods and from the outbreak of war until February 1944 the markets were practically the only avenue through which ordinary Soviet citizens could make purchases to supplement the meagre ration obtained from their *gastronomes*.

The markets are owned and controlled by the State, to which the peasantry pay fees for the use of the stands or stalls from which they sell their commodities. Special provision is made for the transport of their goods from their homes to the market places. They are allowed up to 16 kilograms of goods carriage free on any of the transport systems used by them to get to the markets. A special rate is fixed for all goods weighing more than 16 kilograms.

In addition to the peasants' food stalls set up in most city markets, there are stalls for other odds and ends. The co-operative societies control most of these stalls. The majority of the articles sold are cheap novelties or goods such as buttons, rag footwear, safety pins, and leather products of very poor quality. The goods sold by the peasantry are almost exclusively farm products—wild berries, dried mushrooms, etc—with wild flowers in the spring and summer. In theory these market places are for the sale of the peasants' surplus commodities; but they are actually used extensively by the general public to dispose of surplus commodities, such as left-off clothing.

Agreements between the responsible Soviet authorities and 350 collective farms of the Moscow district were in operation in 1944, providing that the collective farms would bring all surplus commodities to the numerous open markets in Moscow. These agreements resulted in 104,000 tons of foodstuffs from the collective farms being sold in the Moscow open markets during 1944. But

since Moscow has a population of nearly five million, the total amount of food brought to these market places, if spread over the whole population of the city, would not even give an average of 50 pounds of food per person for the year.

### *The Battle for Bread*

The market places are crowded with people from early morning to late evening. For some time after the markets are closed people mill round in the surrounding streets, still buying and selling. With the exception of public holidays, the markets are open daily and are always densely crowded.

Prices in the markets reach a very high level, but since quite a number of the unofficial sales that take place there are conducted with the object of getting sufficient money to purchase food, prices can be equally low on an exchange value basis. For example, a woman I knew in Moscow wished to buy two kilos of potatoes (then selling at 18 roubles per kilo). She brought to the markets to sell five small packets of cigarettes (50 cigarettes in all). After selling them she bought the two kilos of potatoes and showed a profit of 25 roubles.

It is necessary to visit the market places to appreciate fully the value of food and clothing to the ordinary Soviet citizen. Here almost anything short of eggshells has a ready sale at very high prices. It is not necessary to have a large stock of goods in order to make a sale. A few lumps of sugar at 5 roubles a lump, a block of chocolate broken into small squares (each square sells at 10 roubles), pieces of black or white bread, a small bread roll, or any kind of foodstuff, no matter how stale or small, is sufficient stock to start a sale.

Sellers of these commodities mill round with the goods in their hands, or line up along the passage-ways and walls within the market places, holding out the articles they wish to sell. Prospective buyers appear to be as keen to buy as their fellow citizens are to sell.

Limbless soldiers of the Red Army and ill-clad youths hawk Russian cigarettes at three roubles each. Any kind of left-off clothing has an extraordinary sales value in these markets—a worn pair of women's shoes for 2000 roubles; a pair not quite as shabby, 3000 roubles; a pair of women's galoshes, 1300 roubles; a pair of men's galoshes, 2000 roubles; a well-worn pair of men's shoes—originally costing 5 dollars 50 cents in America—2500 roubles; an old pair of men's slippers, originally costing 1 dollar 70 cents brought 700 roubles; a second-hand silk frock in poor condition brought 2700 roubles; skeins of coloured sewing cottons brought 16 roubles per skein; and so on. A second hand suit of clothes could bring anything from 3000 to 5000 roubles.

On the food side, lemons sell at 50 roubles each; large apples, 50 roubles each; 400 grammes of mutton chops, 180 roubles; eggs, 15 roubles each; dressed duck, 700 roubles each; red currants, 60 roubles a kilo; scrag steak, 120 roubles a pound; pork, 250 roubles for half a pound; turkey eggs, 30 roubles each; potatoes, from 27 to 30 roubles per kilo; milk, 25 roubles a small mug; butter, 900 to 1000 roubles per kilo.

Unofficially, black bread was selling at the markets for 120 roubles a kilo; sugar, 900 roubles a kilo; vodka, 300 roubles a half litre bottle; matches, 15 roubles a box; roses, 40 roubles a bloom; a small bunch of flowers consisting of a few phlox and one rose bloom, 125 roubles; a quarter-pound block of chocolate, 160 roubles; boiled sweets, 1 rouble each. It is quite true to say that if it were possible to take into a Moscow market place all the household and personal belongings of an ordinary Australian worker, and have the proceeds from the sale of such goods converted into Australian money at the official rate of exchange, there would be sufficient money to enable that worker to buy the best home in Australia, fittings included.

The sale of bread and other rationed commodities is forbidden by law in these market places, and large numbers of militia men are constantly patrolling inside the markets, but it is quite impossible to enforce the law when mass infringements of it are so evident.

The militia are vested with power to impose fines on people apprehended while selling forbidden commodities in these markets and I have known them to impose and collect fines on the spot up to 100 roubles, while they themselves seek to buy the forbidden goods.

### *Insanitary Conditions*

Milk, meat, and dairy products from the collective farms are sold mainly in large buildings erected within the market place for that purpose, or on special stalls constructed about the market place, and though there are health laws and departments of health in Moscow, they appear to be entirely non-existent where these places are concerned. The conditions under which foodstuffs are sold are sufficient to repel any Australian. Having seen these conditions, I could rarely bring myself to eat any of the meat available in the special shop with which I was registered. I would not have risked drinking the milk sold in the open markets or in the Moscow shops.

Meat is placed on open counters in the markets, and in the summer time the flies are free to enjoy themselves to the full. The meat is not cut as it is in our country, but appears in lumps or hunks, sometimes with portions of the hide still attached. Cus-



tomers pack the pavilions in such numbers that it is almost impossible to move about. The meat is continually being handled and inspected by prospective buyers, who argue with the sellers over the prices, and sometimes take a bite at the meat to test the quality. If it doesn't please them, they throw it back on the counter and seek their requirements elsewhere.

Public lavatories in the market places are the most vile-smelling places imaginable. Although sewerage is laid on in the markets within the city circle it makes little difference to the filth and stench. There are no sanitary pans or cubicles; merely a row of holes in a concreted floor with small footrests on either side of the holes. Over these holes the people crouch in full view of all entering the lavatory. Foodstuffs that the occupants have either just purchased, or are bringing to market for sale, are hung on nails on the walls or packed in heaps in front of the owner while he makes his toilet. In the summer time the stench from these lavatories permeates into the food pavilions, and even in the winter time it is difficult to tolerate the smell that arises from the closely packed bodies of the people. This body odour is apparently something over which the ordinary Soviet citizen has not much control. Soap is almost unknown to the general public, and this fact, coupled with the lack of proper washing and bathing facilities in their apartment houses, does not give them much opportunity to keep clean.

The open market places are also the rendezvous for the light-fingered citizens of the big cities, who can slit open a pocket or bag with as much skill as the pickpockets of any other nation. It is to this class of person that the militia devote the greater part of their time. Although they frequently make arrests in the market places, pickpockets still abound and no doubt will continue to do so until such time as there is full and plenty for the people of the U.S.S.R.—if that time ever arrives.

### *Price Fluctuation*

Prices of farm products in the markets fluctuate with the seasons, as in other countries. In winter prices are at their highest level, dropping slowly as the spring approaches and reaching bedrock with the end of summer, when they commence on the upward spiral again.

The fact that the market places cannot cope with the food demands of the populace, together with the fact that the peasantry themselves have to rely mainly on the markets to purchase commodities other than farm products, and have to pay extremely high prices for such commodities, accounts largely for the fantastically high prices charged for the farm products. One expects to find such economic factors in countries where capitalism is unrestricted, but to find them operating in a supposedly Socialist State comes as a surprise,

especially when Soviet authorities have managed by rigid censorship to hide such economics from workers in the outside world—to such an extent that most foreigners entering the U.S.S.R. are led to believe that the ills of the capitalist world have long since been eliminated from Soviet economy.

Since the State is all-powerful in the U.S.S.R., one would expect to see some attempt to give the people more food at State prices, and to give the collective farmers an equal share with other Soviet citizens in the necessities of life in return for their labours. Not only do the authorities ignore these simple Socialist principles: they compete with the most greedy and avaricious capitalist exploiters of the last century by entering upon the black market themselves through their system of commercial shops and restaurants.

### *Commercial Shops*

In April 1944 the Soviet authorities opened a series of food shops throughout Moscow where goods could be purchased without shop registration, or surrender of ration coupons. This was the beginning of the official entry of the State into the black market of the U.S.S.R. More food shops were opened over a period of some months, and also restaurants, clothing, and general shops in Moscow and other large cities of the U.S.S.R.

When the first of these shops was opened in April 1944 the adjacent city streets had the appearance of beehives, so great were the numbers of Soviet citizens making for the long queues outside, where they would stand for hours awaiting admittance.

These shops sold all kinds of foodstuffs, champagne, vodka, wines and other drinks, cigarettes, cigars, tobacco, chocolate, and sweets of all sorts. Some specialized in one commodity only and others stocked a variety of drinks, smokes, and foodstuffs. One large general store, opened in July 1944, sold almost anything from a needle to an anchor.

### *Class Restaurants*

The special restaurants opened about this time were in addition to the one restaurant that had been operating in Moscow throughout the war period but which only very privileged people could afford to patronize. The new restaurants were on a class basis; there were twenty first-class restaurants. Nineteen of them opened at 1 p.m., closed after lunch, and reopened at 8 p.m. daily. The remaining one opened at 2 p.m. each day and remained open until 5 a.m. the following morning, when all 20 would close, to reopen later in the day. (At that time there was a curfew operating in Moscow between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m.)

Twenty-one second-class restaurants and nine station restaurants or buffets were also opened about this time. Business hours were 12 noon until midnight each day.

### *Some Comparisons*

A person who had not lived in the Soviet Union would find it hard to believe, on seeing these shops, that the general public rarely obtained the full amount on their ration cards and lived mainly on black bread with potato or cabbage soup, and that the issue of a piece of clothing or material for clothing constituted a red letter day for the person lucky enough to procure it. It is when one comes to check the prices charged in these shops that one realizes that the benefit to the Soviet public is nebulous, to say the least of it.

Although large salaries are paid to some U.S.S.R. citizens, the majority of the people do not come within the high salary groupings. A cross-section of Soviet workers reveals an average net wage of less than 500 roubles per month. This fact should be borne in mind when examining the incredible prices charged in commercial stores and restaurants.

The following table shows the prices charged in closed shops and commercial shops for the same commodities:

COMPARISON OF PRICES IN COMMERCIAL SHOPS  
AND CLOSED SHOPS

Item	Quantity	Commercial Shop Prices Roubles	Closed Shop Prices	
			Roubles	Kopeks
Beef	Per kilogram	450	8	60
Beef	" "	600	11	50
Turkey	" "	750	18	50
Herrings	" "	400	12	50
Cheese	" "	750	29	00
Sugar	" "	1000	5	25
Bread, black	" "	70	1	00
Bread, white	" "	275	2	80
Butter	" "	1000	29	00
Eggs	a dozen	240	7	80
Sardines	for 230 grammes	200	6	70
Matches	a dozen boxes	60	2	40

NOTE. 1 kilogram = 2 pounds 2.37 ounces; 1000 grammes = 1 kilogram;  
100 kopeks = 1 rouble.



Prices in the second-class restaurants referred to earlier were on a par with prices in the commercial shops. A glass of tea with two lumps of sugar cost 10 roubles; one small cake, 70 roubles; one sausage, 60 roubles.

The first-class restaurants were obviously designed for first-class people, since the cheapest meal on the menu cost 273 roubles without hors d'oeuvres and drinks other than tea, coffee, or cocoa, while the best meal on the menu, also without hors d'oeuvres and drinks cost 507 roubles per person.

It was possible, of course, to obtain less than the full menu course. One could have a grilled chop for 225 roubles or a fish course for 150 roubles, a quarter-pound block of chocolate for 180 roubles, or a bottle of beer holding two glasses for 40 roubles.

At the station buffets, small buttered bread rolls could be had for 15 roubles each, a slice of bread with a small pat of butter and caviare, 25 roubles; a slice of bread with cheese, 20 roubles, butter, 20 roubles; a sausage, 25 roubles; a small iced cake, 40 roubles; a loaf of sweet bread, 240 roubles; a half-pound box of biscuits, 200 roubles; a quarter-pound block of chocolate, 160 roubles.

Special discounts were given to certain people in the commercial stores and restaurants. Ten per cent discounts in shops and 15 per cent in restaurants were given to workers who had had three years' continuous service in the same undertaking; workers in State enterprises or institutions with a total of six years' continuous employment in the one place were entitled to the same discount as workers with three years' continuous service in other than State undertakings; officers of the Red Army were allowed 35 per cent discount in the shops and 50 per cent in the restaurants. Heroes of the Soviet Union and of Socialist Labour were allowed 40 per cent discount in shops and 50 per cent in restaurants, while laureates of Stalin Prizes received the same discount as Red Army officers.

### *History Repeating Itself*

The opening of special commercial shops in 1944 was no new trend in Soviet economy. It was merely a repetition of what had taken place many years earlier when, over a period of years, up to the abolition of the former rationing, the commercial shops were used as a means of absorbing surplus roubles and increasing the revenue of the State from the turnover tax. At the same time, prices in the stores were subjected to periodical reductions and finally used as a measuring rod for the readjustment of all prices with the abolition of rationing in 1935-6.

The method used in computing new prices was to adjust the new price at a level somewhere between the prices ruling in the commercial stores and those in the *gastronomes* on the ration card. If

a loaf of bread sold in the commercial shops at three roubles and the price of the loaf in the *gastronom* was one rouble, the new price of bread became two roubles, and so on. Authorities on Soviet economy estimate that as a result of this method prices of commercial shop goods were reduced overall by approximately 57 per cent; new prices were approximately twice as much as those formerly paid for the same commodity on the ration card. Butter formerly priced at 8 roubles on the ration card now became 15 roubles; sugar rose from 2 roubles per kilo to 4.20 roubles; white bread rose from 60 kopeks per kilo to 2 roubles; black bread rose from  $\frac{1}{2}$  rouble to 1 rouble per kilo—and so on along the whole scale of commodities.

The effect of this was to reduce prices for those who could afford to buy in the commercial shops. On the other hand, it increased prices for those who could not afford to pay what was asked in those shops. At that time, as a sop to workers who had to suffer this rise in living costs, the Government increased the wage rates of lower paid workers by 10 per cent. The decree announcing this wage rise was accompanied by the usual blast of propaganda to convince workers that the Party and Government had lowered prices and increased wages, thereby increasing the standard of living of the workers.

All the evidence today points to a repetition of this gigantic confidence trick within the next twelve months, when Stalin's recent pronouncement of the abolition of rationing will come into force. Since the reopening of the commercial shops in April 1944 prices for the goods stocked in them have been subjected to a series of reductions. These reductions will no doubt continue until prices reach the level required by the authorities when rationing is abolished.

If stocks in these shops and restaurants were merely the residue after all citizens had received their full allowance of food as shown on the ration card, it would be possible to view the matter in a different light. But when the Soviet citizen seldom receives his full ration card allowance at his *gastronom*, and stocks in the commercial shops are good, the system is hard to justify.

Apologists for this official black-marketing claim that the authorities opened the stores to force down prices in the open markets. They seek to blame the unfortunate peasantry for the high prices and do not appear to realize that the only commodities the peasantry have for sale are raw farm products, while commercial shops sell every conceivable type of goods, from farm and dairy products to household items and clothing. The irony of this is that the apologists have full freedom to disseminate their false theories, but the ordinary citizen would soon find himself cutting wood in a remote part of the Union if he dared to express hostility to the authorities.

Some idea of the impossibility of the ordinary citizen's enjoying reasonable benefit from these commercial shops can be gleaned from my own and my daughter's experience in the U.S.S.R. In the special closed shop with which I was registered eggs were 65 kopeks each; any eggs in excess of our monthly allowance (30 eggs altogether) had to be obtained either in the open markets or in the commercial shops. To have two eggs each for breakfast cost me £288 per annum and this, despite the fact that I enjoyed an exchange rate more than double the official rate. If we managed to get six good eggs in every dozen bought at our food shop, we were lucky, but we could always rely on getting good eggs at the commercial shops or open markets.

### *The Animal Markets*

Other interesting aspects of Russian economy are found in the animal markets, and in the festivities in the cities on special occasions.

The animal market situated on the outskirts of Moscow operates on Sundays. Here may be purchased at fantastic prices, poultry, pigs, cattle, dogs, birds, etc. These animal markets are for the peasantry to buy or sell stock according to their individual needs. Some prices obtained in the market are: 100 roubles for a goldfinch; 500 roubles for a hen canary; small sucking pigs about one month old, 4000 roubles each; rabbits, from 250 to 600 roubles each, according to colours; white leghorn hens, 500 roubles each; a nanny goat at 6000 roubles; geese, 1500 roubles each; a calf about eight months old, 28,000 roubles; cows, from 28,000 to 60,000 roubles each; a half-breed Alsatian dog, 3000 roubles.

With the collapse of Germany and the return of loot to the U.S.S.R., thousands of sporting guns bearing the names of German makers appeared suddenly in this particular market place. They were for sale at from 2000 roubles each.

Considering that the peasantry are the people who pay these extortionate prices for cows, poultry, etc., it is little wonder that they in turn charge such high prices in the other market places for their milk, meat, and eggs.

### *The Festive Season*

The commercial shops are not the only means used to relieve the people of surplus roubles. The festive season of Christmas and New Year is also used by the State as a source of revenue. The official celebrations are at the New Year, but they are conducted on the same lines as the Christmas festivities of other countries. Instead of having a Father Christmas to delight the hearts of the smaller children, the Russians have their Jack Frost. The Christmas tree is a common feature of these festivities. During the 1945-6



season a competition was conducted between various public organizations for the biggest and best Christmas tree. Commercial shops had their windows hung with decorations and huge Christmas trees were erected within some of the larger shops. The Hermitage, the Hall of Columns, the Gorky Park of Rest and Culture, and several of the larger inner squares of Moscow city, all had their large Christmas trees and conducted festivities spread over a couple of weeks.

In the principal Moscow squares a series of stalls was erected representing old Russian villages. Platforms were built in the centre where amateur artists performed each night. A huge brilliantly-lit Christmas tree adorned the middle of each square and crowds flocked to see the fun day and night. Street dancing with music took place at night.

In addition to—or as part of—the decorations, large portraits of Stalin and members of the Politbureau were hung in shop windows, outside all principal buildings, and at other points throughout the city.

Stalls in the squares were conducted by the various trusts that go to make up the Soviet food administration. Christmas novelties and titbits were on sale at very high prices. Small apples were 15 roubles each; very small mandarins, 5 roubles each; a slice of sandwich cake about three inches by two inches, 20 roubles; a slice of white bread spread with red caviare, 12 roubles; the Russian equivalent of a small meat pie, 5 roubles; a  $\frac{1}{2}$  litre bottle of vodka, 110 roubles, and so on.

The festivities in the squares were principally for adults, children being catered for at such places as The Hermitage, the Gorky Park of Rest and Culture, factory clubs, etc. The principal and best show was that conducted by the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions in the Hall of Columns, formerly the Noblemen's Club of Moscow. This hall is situated in the heart of the city, and is now the chief meeting place of the Soviet Trade Unions for all big conferences; it is also used as a meeting-place by other organizations. The interior of the building is magnificent and lends itself to festivities such as those described better than any other building in Russia. Here the celebrations go on for several weeks, with three sessions a day, about 2000 people being accommodated daily.

Entrance to the Hall of Columns show is by ticket, which, as far as I could ascertain, is fairly easy to procure provided the money is available. Tickets cost 10 roubles each, for children and adults alike. On entering, the children are given coloured paper caps and are allowed to select their own form of entertainment, of which there is a very wide range. Artists from the State Circus and other entertainers perform in different parts of the building. Slippery dips and every conceivable form of amusement are situated in the vestibules and corridors of this huge hall. In the main hall a big Christ-

mas tree, gaily decorated with coloured lights and tinsel, slowly revolves. Each entertainment is preceded by the customary eulogy of Stalin, of whom there is a large picture, as the person responsible for the success of the festivities.

On payment of an additional 15 roubles Christmas presents are handed out to the children at the close of the performance. Each present consists of a small coloured paper bag containing a few pieces of fruit, a small packet of biscuits, a couple of sweets and a small bar of chocolate, all of which would not cost more than a shilling in Australia. The entertainment and the present cost 35 roubles—a day's wages for a worker in a fairly high wage group, or more than seven days' wages for a shoe worker in the lowest wage group.

## CHAPTER IV

### FACTORY DINERS

#### *Job Canteens*

IN the large industrial plants and institutions of the Soviet Union are established canteens, most of them conducted by the Workers' Supply organizations, where workers can dine at special prices calculated to cover costs, administration, and profit. The meals are very cheap compared with the charges in the restaurants, etc. referred to earlier.

In some of the larger establishments and industries the whole of the workers' food supplies are handled by Workers' Supply organizations—the workers surrendering to the organization all their ration coupons.

Other places, such as Government offices, have food counters at which cereals, milk, and other light refreshments may be purchased by employees.

The larger the establishment, and the more energetic the Workers' Supply organization section, the greater the possibility of the workers receiving more and better food. Smaller institutions frequently endeavour to have their members attached to the dining-rooms of the larger institutions.

The factory administration is responsible for the feeding of children enrolled in the half yearly compulsory labour call-ups (Labour Reserves Law of 1940), and the boys and girls must surrender all their food coupons. Prior to 1 March 1944 these children were not obliged to eat in the factory dining-rooms but could retain their coupons and provide their own food. So great was the number of youngsters trafficking in food coupons, that, by special order, they were compelled to make a full surrender of their coupons to the factory administration on and after 1 March 1944. The factory administration was then obliged to provide them with all meals.

As I mentioned earlier, food coupons have a ready sale on the black market and these children were found to be exploiting the demand and resorting to illegal methods to obtain other coupons or foodstuffs.

Another development in recent years has been the establishment



by large enterprises of auxiliary farms. Any supplies left after the workers on a farm have been fed go to the canteens of the enterprise to which the farm is attached, and full control and direction of the farm and its workers belongs to that enterprise.

There is no doubt that these auxiliary farms have increased food supplies to the workers in undertakings to which the farm products are sent, but the development of the farms has not as yet, reached a stage where the workers are adequately fed.

### *Trade Union Checking*

Responsibility for checking control over factory dining-rooms—"public dining-rooms" and "public control" are the official terms used—falls on the Soviet Trade Union movement. This organization appoints large numbers of officials to systematically check the weight of foodstuffs served to workers, the accuracy of weighing apparatus, and the correct distribution of food according to the workers' categories; they must ensure that Stakhanovites and "Best Workers" are allowed the additional food to which their speed in working entitles them, arrange for the families of Red Army heroes to receive special treatment, and check pilfering.

No doubt these officials prevent many abuses, but they have a long way to go before accomplishing the task for which they were appointed. The Soviet Trade Union movement should devote more time to looking after the welfare of its members in relation to food, and less time to enforcing industrial discipline and speeding-up tactics. The position at present is that the dining-rooms attached to the larger enterprises are the centre of differentiation between workers and graft and corruption by Soviet officialdom.

According to an article published in the Moscow journal *Bolshevik* on 20 April 1944 there were 2000 dining-rooms in the Moscow district serving one and a half million workers. The article stated that some of the dining-rooms were satisfactory, but others left much to be desired.

### *Dividing the Workers*

While in Moscow I visited one of the large dining-rooms considered to be operating satisfactorily. Here I found dull, drab, rooms with bare tables, to which the workers would bring their meals from the food issuing counter. Lunch consisted of a piece of black bread and a plate of vegetable soup.

In an adjoining dining-room the Stakhanovites and "Best Workers" were accommodated. There were curtains on the windows and cloths on the tables. Three-course meals were brought to the tables by waitresses.

Across the way was yet another dining-room. Here also the

windows were curtained and the tables had cloths, but this room had its own private kitchen, although it was on the same floor as the other dining-rooms. Here the managerial staff of the plant dined on food superior in quantity and quality to that provided for the workers across the passage.

In the Soviet Union food is used as economic pressure on the worker. The fact that a worker receives more money than his comrades for more work does not help him to buy better food than they eat—to do this he must be among the very fastest workers of the plant. This earns him the title of Stakhanovite or “Best Worker” which entitles him to eat in a higher class dining-room.

### *I Dine in a Rest Home*

On one occasion I was escorted over a workers' rest home. The dining-room accommodated some thirty to forty workers. There were clean white curtains on the windows and flowers and white cloths on the tables. At the time of my visit there was only one person occupying the room. He was seated in the far corner directly facing the door and as we entered, he rose to his feet and stood to attention until told by the director to be seated. He had been having his lunch of a plate of soup with a piece of black bread, and a meat, a vegetable, and a sweet course.

I had had some experience of conducted inspections, so on leaving the room I asked the director to show me the general dining-room. He complied by taking me to a much larger room at the end of the passage in which were seated, at bare tables, some eighty or so workers, both men and women.

I noticed that as we entered no one attempted to rise and stand to attention as did the solitary diner. I also noticed that the meal in this general dining-room consisted of soup and black bread.

To complete the tour of inspection we adjourned to another dining-room, furnished in the same way as the first one. Here I was served with as good a meal as a man could wish for. Of course, only the director and other executive heads and our official party were present. I came away from that workers' rest home with the satisfaction of knowing that I had entered a workers' rest home in the U.S.S.R., dined in its dining-room, had an excellent meal, and learned how Soviet workers are fed in rest homes.

### *Prices in Moscow Commercial Shops*

The following is a list of prices of commodities available in Moscow commercial shops as at 6 July 1944. Twenty-one roubles go to a pound sterling.

Commodity	Price in Roubles
<b>MEN'S WEAR</b>	
Tweed suits, three piece .. .. .	5550 to 6650
Shirts, Russian style .. .. .	490 to 1100
Shirts, with two collars to match, also tie and metal sleeve links .. .. .	1680
Singlet and underpants (short) .. .. .	560
Socks (poor quality) .. .. .	270
Braces (plain) .. .. .	175
Suspenders (very coarse) .. .. .	35
Handkerchiefs (white) .. .. .	30
Handkerchiefs (silk, fancy coloured) .. .. .	80
Woollen scarf .. .. .	360
Woollen sweater .. .. .	1450 to 1900
Ties .. .. .	146
Felt hats .. .. .	600
Caps, cloth .. .. .	320 to 405
Caps, fur .. .. .	1000
<b>FOOTWEAR</b>	
Shoes (per pair) .. .. .	1650, 1800, 2100, 3000, 3400
White canvas shoes .. .. .	1000
Tan hide sandals .. .. .	700
Rubber galoshes (the cheapest) .. .. .	1080
Riding boots .. .. .	4000
<b>SUNDRIES</b>	
Safety razor (poor quality) .. .. .	250
Blade razor .. .. .	250
Hair clippers .. .. .	250
Sleeve links (metal) .. .. .	83
Travelling case (24 inch, fibre board) .. .. .	1000
Cigarette lighter (small) .. .. .	75
Note wallets (leather) .. .. .	250
Leather satchel (small) .. .. .	400
<b>WOMEN'S WEAR</b>	
Slips .. .. .	225 to 320
Slips, silk .. .. .	1045 to 1650
Corsets (poor quality) .. .. .	275
Stockings (cotton) .. .. .	280
Garter elastic (per metre) .. .. .	43
Handkerchiefs (coloured, silk) .. .. .	290
Scarfs (coloured, silk) .. .. .	570
Shawls (coloured, silk) .. .. .	740
Dress (spotted print) .. .. .	865
Dress (crêpe de chine) .. .. .	3010
Coat and skirt (crêpe de chine) .. .. .	4020
Blouse to match .. .. .	1210
Woollen sweater .. .. .	1020 to 1650
Hat (straw) .. .. .	710
Hat (small, of paper composition) .. .. .	210
Tam-o'shanter .. .. .	200
Overcoats (persian lamb with fur collar) .. .. .	32,500
Overcoats (grey squirrel fur) .. .. .	15,000
Shoes .. .. .	2000, 2600, 3040, 4230



<i>Commodity</i>	<i>Price in Roubles</i>
Gloves (cloth)	125
Gloves (leather)	400 to 500
Small purses	75 to 110
Handbags (large)	800
Handbags (small)	600
Umbrellas	375 to 430
Perfume (per bottle)	150 to 500
Powder (face, per box)	25 to 90
Cream (face, per pot)	50
Powder puff (small, of poor quality)	20
Lipstick (in metal container)	40 to 60

## PRESENTS PREPARED IN GIFT BOXES

Handbag, scarf (silk), and leather gloves	2200
One pair bloomers, one pair stockings, and a cake of toilet soap	688
One slip, one pair stockings, and one bottle perfume	1013
One box face powder, one cake soap, and two bottles perfume	1500
One pair bloomers, one pair stockings, and one silk shawl	1900

## CHILDREN'S AND INFANTS' WEAR

Baby's silk dress	360 to 365
Baby's socks	22 to 36
Baby's shoes (0's to 6's)	230
Girl's shoes	340 to 430
Socks	45 to 70
Mittens	90 to 175
A dressed doll	750
Boy's sandals	300 to 600
Small boy's suit (two piece sailor)	760
Woollen sweater	750

## GIFTS AND PRESENTS

Half pound box of chocolates and six teaspoons	800
Half pound box of chocolates and glass jam dish in metal stand	755
Half pound box of chocolates, tea glass in metal container, and spoon	455
Tea glass in container with spoon	265
Knife, fork, and teaspoon	265
Box of one dozen dessertspoons	2835

## MANCHESTER GOODS

Bed quilts (small)	850
Bed quilts (large)	1950
Lace window curtain material (per metre)	150 to 500
Coloured table cloths	1100 to 1600
Dollies	96 to 240
Needlework silk (per skein)	50

## CROCKERY

Tea set (10 pieces)	760
Dinner set (39 pieces)	2750

<i>Commodity</i>	<i>Price in Roubles</i>
Plates, soup (each)	68
Plates, dinner (each)	54
Plates, small (each)	45
Saucers	20
Cup and saucer	54 to 63
Tea pot, small	99
<b>GLASSWARE</b>	
Butter dish (small plain glass)	30
Tumblers (small plain glass)	30 to 40
Fruit stands (plain and coloured)	490 to 540
Vase	230 to 545
Decanter on glass tray with six small glasses	1070
Punch bowl on glass tray with six small glasses	2250
Ash tray	20
<b>COOKING UTENSILS</b>	
Kettle, aluminium (large)	900
Boiler, aluminium (about 3 quart capacity)	650 to 680
Bowl, aluminium (small)	85
Saucepan, enamel (small)	175
Primus stove (small)	750
Samovar	4000
<b>ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT</b>	
Iron	600 to 800
Circular stovelets	400 to 550
Flex with fittings (2 metres)	120
Torch (small)	230
Light globes (15 to 25 candlepower)	100
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	
Alarm clock	500
Hiker's canvas pack	300
Washingup dish (plain tin)	200 to 300
Baby's bath	750
Mandolin (poor quality)	400 to 500

Food

<i>Commodity</i>	<i>Price in Roubles</i>
<b>Meat</b>	
Beef	450 to 600 (per kilogram)
Ox tongues	400
Ox kidneys	300
Ox liver	300
Mutton	360 to 450
Pork	500 to 600
Sucking pig	500
<b>Smallgoods</b>	
Sausages	450 to 850
Frankfurts	500
Ham	500
Bacon	750
Tinned meats	610
Cooked goose	800
Cooked chicken	700

<i>Commodity</i>	<i>Price in Roubles</i>	
<i>Poultry and Game</i>		
Game birds .. ..	180 to	400
Chicken (dressed) ..		520
Hens .. ..		700
Geese .. ..	350 to	400
Turkey .. ..		750
Ducks .. ..		420
<i>Fish</i>		
Herrings .. ..	350 to	400
Sturgeon .. ..		600
Perch .. ..		200
Other fish .. ..	710 to	900
Small fish .. ..		180
Smoked .. ..	250 to	500
Sardines .. ..	165 to	200 (tin of 230 grammes)
Oil .. ..		730 (tin of 250 grammes)
Caviare—black .. ..	1000 to	2400 (per kilogram)
Caviare—red .. ..	650 to	750 " "
<i>Dairy Products</i>		
Cheese .. ..	500 to	750 (per kilogram)
Butter .. ..	900 to	1050
Eggs (hen) .. ..		240 (a dozen)
Milk, fresh .. ..		25 ( $\frac{1}{2}$ litre)
Milk, tinned .. ..		200 (400 grammes)
Cream .. ..		230 (per litre)
<i>Bread and Cakes</i>		
Black bread .. ..		70 (per kilogram)
White bread .. ..		275
Biscuits (small packet)		140 (a packet)
Tea cakes (about $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. weight) .. ..		200 (each)
Cake .. ..		270 (400 grammes)
Cakes (small) .. ..		50 (each)
<i>Smokes</i>		
Cigarettes .. ..		80 (a packet of 20)
Cigars .. ..		20 (each)
Matches, wooden ..		60 (a dozen boxes)
<i>Sweets</i>		
Fruit bon-bons .. ..		750 (per kilogram)
<i>Fruit</i>		
Apples .. ..		20 (each)
Grapefruit .. ..		120
Raisins .. ..		400 (per kilogram)
Currants .. ..		450
Dried fruits .. ..	270 to	600
Dates .. ..		400
Sultanas .. ..		400
Preserved fruits ..	135 to	140 (a bottle of approx. 1 lb.)



<i>Commodity</i>	<i>Price in Roubles</i>
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	
Preserved tomatoes ..	110 (a bottle 580 grammes)
Dried mushrooms ..	900 (per kilogram)
Lima beans .. ..	180
Macaroni .. ..	200
Sugar .. ..	800 to 1000
Lard .. ..	850

**DRINKS**

Muscat wine .. ..	550 (a bottle)
Georgian wines .. ..	200 to 360
Lemonade .. ..	33 (a bottle)
Vodka .. ..	200 to 350 ( $\frac{1}{2}$ litre)
Champagne .. ..	260 (a bottle)

NOTE. 1000 grammes = 1 kilogram  
 1 kilogram = 2 pounds 2·37 ounces  
 1 litre = 1 quart.

*Restaurant "Moskva" Menu*

The following is a copy of the menu of the restaurant "Moskva".

PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT FOR TRADE OF THE U.S.S.R.  
 MOSCOW RESTAURANT TRUST  
 RESTAURANT "MOSKVA"  
 MENU

24 April 1944

*Cold Hors d'œuvres*  
 According to special price list

	<i>First course</i>	<i>Roubles</i>
Vermicelli soup with meat .. ..	.. ..	60
Bullion with toast .. ..	.. ..	25
Fish solianka .. ..	.. ..	75
Mixed meat solianka .. ..	.. ..	80
Shahi, day old .. ..	.. ..	55
<i>Fish</i>		
Sturgeon steamed .. ..	.. ..	100
Sturgeon American .. ..	.. ..	105
Beluga in brine .. ..	.. ..	100
Pike-perch, boiled with egg sauce .. ..	.. ..	60
Pike-perch, fried .. ..	.. ..	85
<i>Meat Dishes</i>		
Rissoles in sour cream with potatoes .. ..	.. ..	80
Bœuf Stroganov with potatoes .. ..	.. ..	130
Boiled bacon with cabbage .. ..	.. ..	135 <sup>s</sup>
Minced chicken cutlets with vegetables .. ..	.. ..	130
Roast turkey with potatoes .. ..	.. ..	110
Roast goose with cabbage .. ..	.. ..	145
Hazel hen in sour cream .. ..	.. ..	115
Partridge in butter .. ..	.. ..	110

	<i>Sweets</i>	<i>Roubles</i>
Plums in syrup		50
Ice cream		40
Kasha "Guryev"		45

	<i>Hot Drinks</i>	
Tea with lemon		15
Tea without lemon		10
Coffee with milk		25
Coffee, black		20
Cocoa in milk		40

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Tart		60
Pastry		50
Bread, black (100 grammes)		8
Bread, white (80%) (100 grammes)		27.50
Bread, white (72%) (100 grammes)		20

Bread with hors d'œuvres, 50 grammes per dish.

Bread with soup and second course 100 grammes.

## CHAPTER V

### SOVIET TAXATION

#### *Taking it Back*

THROUGH the various Soviet trading organizations, the populace has to pay, indirectly, turnover tax to the State, in addition to which the citizens are subject to ordinary income tax based on income and occupation, with a special tax for bachelors or families with less than three children. During the war there was also a special war tax (this was abolished as from 1 January 1946).

The peasants, though exempt from ordinary State income tax, have to pay taxation according to special schedules under the agricultural taxation laws. This taxation varies according to the household and the district, depending on the method fixed by the local authorities, who are charged with the responsibility of fixing such taxation in accordance with the general principles laid down in the agricultural taxation laws.

Taxation ranges from 100 roubles per annum for households with earnings of not more than 1000 roubles, up to a tax of 1410 roubles a year for a household earning over 6000 roubles, with an additional tax of 45 kopeks for every rouble earned in excess of 6000 per annum.

Workers and employees pay income tax according to an established schedule which provides for taxation each month on the earnings of all citizens with a monthly income in excess of 150 roubles. The tax ranges from the first grouping of monthly incomes between 151 and 200 roubles, tax being 2.25 roubles plus 5.5 per cent of the amount in excess of 150 roubles, up to a monthly earning of 1001 roubles and over, on which a monthly tax of 82 roubles plus 13 per cent of the amount earned in excess of 1000 is payable.

Authors and artists have a schedule of taxation ranging from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of their annual earnings not exceeding 1800 roubles, to a tax of 104, 204 roubles on annual earnings of 300,001 roubles or more plus 55 per cent of all earnings in excess of 300,000 roubles.

Homecraftsmen (skilled artisans who work privately and individually, such as shoemakers, tailors, dressmakers, watchmakers,



etc.) pay according to a schedule ranging from a tax of 3 per cent on earnings up to 1800 roubles per annum, to a tax of 30,958 roubles on annual earnings exceeding 70,000 roubles, with an additional tax of 65 per cent on all earnings in excess of 70,000 roubles per annum. (This class of citizen is rapidly fading out of Soviet economy, but during the war period the authorities, as an encouragement to homecraftsmen to speed up their production, reduced payments to be made by them to the above figures.)

Doctors, lawyers, teachers, doctors' assistants, and other workers with private practices pay taxation in addition to their State duties, according to an established schedule. This ranges from 2½ per cent on annual earnings up to 1800 roubles, to a tax of 25,324 roubles on earnings in excess of 70,000 roubles, with an additional tax of 55 per cent on all earnings in excess of 70,000 roubles.

### *The War Tax*

The war tax operated on three different scales according to the class of person. General workers and employees were obliged to pay according to the following monthly scale:—

#### WAR TAX

<i>Income per Annum (roubles)</i>	<i>Tax (roubles)</i>
Up to 1,800	120
2,400	180
3,600	240
4,800	360
6,000	480
7,200	660
8,400	780
9,600	900
10,800	1,020
12,000	1,140
14,400	1,320
16,800	1,560
19,200	1,800
21,600	2,040
24,000	2,280
Over 24,000	2,700

The peasantry, though exempt from this schedule, were obliged to pay war tax based on the total income of their household. This tax

ranged from 150 to 600 roubles per annum for every member of the household. The actual amount to be paid by each household was determined by the local authorities who were obliged, when assessing the annual income of each household, to include proceeds from private allotments and payments in kind made from collective farms.

An interesting aspect of this war tax was its application to people of military age. Any person who was liable to be conscripted into the armed forces of the U.S.S.R., but who had been released from such conscription to carry on work in industry or other undertakings, was required to pay the war tax as set out in the schedule, plus 50 per cent according to the taxation group under which his earnings brought him. High ranking military officers attached to undertakings and industry paid the war tax according to this schedule, but unlike the worker who had been released from military duty to carry on in industry, these officers were not obliged to pay the extra 50 per cent.

It will be noticed that the schedule made no provision for extra taxation of people whose earnings exceeded 24,000 roubles per annum or 2000 roubles per month. Consequently, this taxation fell most heavily upon the workers with earnings ranging from 150 to 2000 roubles per month.

### *The Small Families Tax*

The other form of direct taxation was that imposed upon bachelors or people with small families. Under this law, male citizens between the ages of 20 and 50 years and female citizens between 20 and 45 years who have no children are taxed 6 per cent of their earnings. Those with one child are obliged to pay 1 per cent of their earnings; those with two children are taxed  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of salary.

The general taxation measure referred to came into operation on 30 April 1943, replacing two earlier taxation laws. Prior to 1943 the workers were obliged to pay the ordinary income tax and a tax to meet needs in housing, cultural, and living conditions. While the 1943 law, by combining the two previous taxation laws, made the total taxation payable under the new law slightly less than that which was formerly payable separately under the two laws, the actual difference for workers was very slight indeed.

A worker earning 1000 roubles per month gained 27 roubles per annum under the new schedule. Doctors, lawyers, etc., and home-craftsmen in the high earning group gained the most benefit, though it was not great.

### *State Loans*

Since 1927 State loans have been a regular feature of Soviet economy. The first loan of two hundred million roubles was launched

in 1927 under the title of the First Industrialization Loan. This was followed in 1928 and 1929 by the second and third Industrialization Loans. In 1930 came the first issue of the loan to complete the Five Year Plan in four years, two additional loans for the same purpose being launched in 1931 and 1932. These loans became increasingly large and were followed in 1933 with the first loan for the Second Five Year Plan, and in 1934-5 and 1936 with three more loans for the Second Five Year Plan.

In all, between 1927 and the Fourth Five Year Plan Loan of 1936, ten State loans were launched and filled to the extent of 19,932 million roubles. From 1936 to 1941 there were four loans for financing the Third Five Year Plan and one Defence Loan for 38,895 million roubles was opened and filled.

In 1942 the first War Loan was launched followed by the second War Loan in 1943 and the third in 1944, making in all a total of 62,984 million roubles. In May 1945 the fourth War Loan of 25,000 million roubles was opened making in all over a period of nineteen years no less than 24 loans to the value of 152,811 million roubles.

Most of the loans were for twenty years from date of issue and a relatively small amount of the money subscribed bore interest rates.

### *Voluntary Subscription*

With Soviet loans, the point of interest to me was the rapidity with which they were filled. In the loans held while I was in the U.S.S.R., I noticed that within a couple of days after the official opening of a loan the newspapers printed the good news that the loan had been filled; however when the methods adopted in filling such loans are revealed this accomplishment is not as great as it at first appears.

What happens is that with the opening of a new loan, meetings are held in all workshops and enterprises in the U.S.S.R. at which prepared resolutions are submitted, pledging support of the loan and committing every worker in the plant or enterprise to contribute to it so many weeks' wages. Of course contribution is voluntary, but it would indeed be dangerous for any worker who refused to subscribe.

Here again the Soviet Trade Unions play an important part. It is their job to see that all workers and employees subscribe. It is left to the agitators and Party members to handle the peasants.

Naturally, the Press gives a great deal of publicity to the fact that it is every citizen's duty to the Fatherland to subscribe to these loans. The papers urge Party and Trade Union organizations to take an active part in the campaign. In this connexion it is of interest to quote from one Moscow publication (*Krasnaya Zvezda*



of 5 May 1945) dealing with the fourth War Loan, opened on the same date: "The Trade Unions must see to it that all workers and employees contribute from three to four weeks income to the fourth State War Loan."

### *Wages*

In examining wages paid in the Soviet Union, one must consider taxation and contributions to State loans which reduce the worker's wage considerably. One must also consider the privileges accruing to certain sections that increase the value of their rouble over the rouble of their less fortunate fellow workers.

One frequently hears tales of workers in heavy industries receiving wages that run to four figures each month. Owing to the method of fixation of piece-work prices and the absence of statistics, however, it is not possible to estimate how many workers in any given plant or plants are in receipt of such wages. The only way of finding out would be to have access to the wage books of the plant or industry.

The various branches of the Soviet Trade Union movement present annual budgets to the main body, the A.U.C.C.T.U. (the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions) containing the plan of their particular section for the ensuing twelve months. In this plan they estimate the total number of workers in the respective plants, the anticipated Trade Union membership, average wages paid to the workers, and the contributions to be received from them, together with other matters.

One such plan was made the subject of criticism by the head office of the Trade Unions and used in the A.U.C.C.T.U. *Manual for the Guidance of Factory and Local Committees*, No. 6 of 1945. From this manual it is learned that in one factory of the tank and tractor industry the Trade Unions budgeted on an average monthly wage of 320 roubles for the workers in that factory, whereas the actual average wage was 375 roubles.

Just how generally the average wage of 375 roubles would operate in Soviet heavy industry I do not know, but it is not illogical to assume from the wages rates for shoe trade operators and others, mentioned elsewhere, that this particular case was not an exception.

The same manual disclosed that the stage director of the factory club was receiving a salary of 700 roubles per month.

I acquired some schedules of wage rates, based on a flat monthly wage, that are of interest in considering this question of wages. The *Journal of Ordinances and Instructions of the Government*

of the U.S.S.R., no. 5 of 1945, contained a decision of the Council of People's Commissars to increase the wage rates payable to the educational staff of kindergartens as from 1 June 1945. The new rates fixed by this ordinance were as follows:

#### WAGES OF TEACHERS IN KINDERGARTENS

Category	In Cities and Working Towns			In Rural Districts		
	Working Experience			Working Experience		
	Up to 5 Years	5 to 10 Years	Over 10 Years	Up to 5 Years	5 to 10 Years	Over 10 Years
	Roubles per Month			Roubles per Month		
Educators having an average pedagogical education	350	375	400	300	325	350
Educators having an average general education	300	325	350	250	275	300

Under this law members of the educational staff in kindergartens having a higher education were to receive salaries 15 per cent higher than those set out above, while those who had not finished an average education were to receive 10 per cent lower than the rates shown.

This same law also increased the salaries of managers of kindergartens, who are paid according to their record of service and the number of groups of children in the establishment. The new rates in roubles per month now stand as follows:

#### WAGES OF KINDERGARTEN MANAGERS

##### *In Cities and Working Towns:*

Up to 3 Groups			4 to 5 Groups			Over 5 Groups		
Record of Pedagogical Work								
Up to 5 Years	5 to 10 Years	Over 10 Years	Up to 5 Years	5 to 10 Years	Over 10 Years	Up to 5 Years	5 to 10 Years	Over 10 Years
450	475	500	475	500	525	500	525	550
In Rural Districts:								
375	400	425	400	425	450	425	450	475

If a manager of any kindergarten has a higher education he is entitled under the law to have his salary increased by 15 per cent.

The Soviet Trade Unions conduct quite a large network of libraries throughout the U.S.S.R. and one of the functions of the Secretariat of the A.U.C.C.T.U. is to fix the salaries paid to workers employed in these libraries.

By special ordinance issued by the A.U.C.C.T.U. and published in the *Manual for the Guidance of Factory and Local Committees*, no. 3 of 1945, salaries of workers in the Trade Union libraries were increased as from 1 December 1944 to the following roubles per month:

## WAGES OF LIBRARY WORKERS

Category of Library Workers	With a record of Library Work of:		
	Up to 5 Years	5 to 10 Years	Over 10 Years
1st category: Librarians with a high education	450	500	550
2nd category: Librarians not having finished a high education	425	475	525
3rd category: Librarians having an average library education	350	400	450
4th category: Librarians having a general average education	325	375	425

Librarians under this wage schedule not having finished an average education were to be paid 10 per cent less than those having an average education. Those with a high library education were to receive 10 per cent more than the rates set out in the first category, and those with a twenty-five years' record of library work were also to receive an additional 10 per cent over the rate established for those with a record of ten years library work.

By special decree of the Council of People's Commissars published in the *Journal of Ordinances and Instructions of the Government of the U.S.S.R.*, no. 14 of 1944, a new schedule of monthly salaries was fixed for managers of cottage reading rooms and rural clubs, and art managers and instructors in rayon houses of culture, to operate from 1 August 1944 as follows:



## WAGES OF MANAGERS OF CULTURAL GROUPS

(in roubles)

Record of Political and  
Enlightenment Work

Category	Up to 5 Years	Over 5 Years
<i>Managers of Cottage Reading Rooms and Rural Clubs</i>		
1st category: Having an average education	275	325
2nd category: Not having an average education	250	300
<i>Rayon Houses of Culture</i>		
1st group (in cities & working towns)		
Directors of rayon houses of culture	500	550
Art managers " " " "	425	475
Instructors " " " "	375	425
2nd group (in rural districts)		
Directors of rayon houses of culture	450	500
Art managers " " " "	375	425
Instructors " " " "	325	375

By another special decree (no. 1114) of the Council of People's Commissars signed on 16 August 1944, monthly wages were raised, as from 1 August 1944, for library workers of scientific, scientific-technical, branch, and public libraries attached to scientific research institutions and higher educational institutions of all the People's Commissariats and central Government departments, likewise of *krais*, *oblasts*, and republics under the People's Commissariats for Education of the Republics of the Union.

## WAGES IN LIBRARIES

(in roubles)

## A. For Leading Workers:

Category of Workers	Libraries		
	1st Category	2nd Category	3rd Category
Directors of libraries	1800	1500	1200
Assistant directors for Science	1600	1300	1000
Managers of branches, sections, chief librarians, chief bibliographers, managers of reading rooms in State public libraries, managers of sectors and studies	1500	1200	900
Learned secretaries	1300	1100	850
Managers of libraries in scientific research institutions or high educational institutions (dependent on the volume of work in the library)	1200	1000	800
			800 to 1000

**B. For Library Workers:**  
(in roubles)

<i>Categories of Workers</i>	<i>Libraries of the 1st Category</i>			<i>Libraries of the 2nd Category</i>			<i>Libraries of the 3rd Category</i>		
	<i>Up to 5 Years Record</i>	<i>5-10 Years Record</i>	<i>Over 10 Years Record</i>	<i>Up to 5 Years Record</i>	<i>5-10 Years Record</i>	<i>Over 10 Years Record</i>	<i>Up to 5 Years Record</i>	<i>5-10 Years Record</i>	<i>Over 10 Years Record</i>
Chief editors, editor specialists	1000	1100	1200	900	1000	1100	800	900	1000
Chief bibliographers, bibliographer editors, methodists	800	900	1000	750	800	900	700	750	800
Chief librarians, biblio- graphers, instructors, inspectors	750	850	950	700	750	800	650	700	750
Librarians — Translators	600	700	800	550	600	700	500	550	600
Assistant librarians	325	375	425	325	375	425	325	375	425
Library technicians	120	300	350	250	300	350	250	300	350

Salaries of agricultural experts and other workers of rayon agricultural administrations were also increased by order of the Council of People's Commissars as from 1 December 1944. The salary scale of monthly payments was as follows:

### WAGES OF AGRICULTURAL EXPERTS

(in roubles)

Category	Record of Work in Profession		
	Under 3 Years	3 to 10 Years	Over 10 Years
Chief agricultural experts of rayon agricultural administrations	650	750	850
Agricultural experts in charge of individual branches of farming in rayon agricultural departments, experts of rayon seed farms, seed nurseries for grass plants, rayon and inter-rayon offices of the Sorted Vegetable Seeds Trust and experts of rayon seed control laboratories:			
(a) Having a higher agronomic education	500	575	650
(b) Having an average agronomic education	400	450	500
Section experts of rayon agricultural administrations and offices of Sorted Vegetable Seeds Trust:			
(a) Having a higher agronomic education	475	550	625
(b) Having an average agronomic education	350	400	450
Chief land surveyors, chief meliorators, chief agricultural and forest meliorators, chief building engineers of rayon agricultural administrations, managers of rayon seed control laboratories and chief agricultural experts of the rayon and inter-rayon offices of the Sorted Vegetable Seeds Trust	600	700	800
Land surveyors, agricultural and forest meliorators, meliorator peat experts, engineers, and technicians:			
(a) Having higher special education	500	575	650
(b) Having average special education	400	450	500
Instructors—organizers		400 to 500	
Book-keeping instructors		400 to 500	
Book-keepers		300 to 400	
Statisticians		250 to 300	



*More Comparisons*

It will be seen from the foregoing tables of salaries that the people within those groups, after payment of all taxation and loan obligations, would receive on an average far less than 500 roubles per month.

Probably no section of Soviet salary payments reveals class distinction in the U.S.S.R. so clearly as the payments made to members of the Red Army. As mentioned before, high ranking military officers of the Soviet Union enjoy privileges in food, housing, etc., not available to the common people. Because of these special privileges the rouble of a Red Army officer has greater purchasing value than the rouble of a private in the Army or of the common worker. A wide contrast is to be found between the pay of officers and privates in the armed forces of any country, but I doubt if it is as great as in the U.S.S.R.

A few of the salary payments made in the Red Army are of interest: A Marshal of the Red Army receives 5000 roubles per month, a Colonel 2400 roubles, a Lieutenant 1000 roubles, and a private 10 roubles.

Other salary payments within the U.S.S.R. also disclose a contrast: Ballerinas receive 2500 roubles per month, first-class variety actresses, 1500 roubles, members of a corps de ballet, 600 roubles, and women porters in a Moscow hotel, 200 roubles.

Here we find ballerinas and first-class artists receiving privileges in food, clothing, and housing, and being able to obtain discounts at commercial shops and restaurants which members of the *corps de ballet* or hotel porters do not receive. This greatly enhances the value of roubles paid to ballerinas and actresses as against those paid to members of the *corps de ballet* and hotel porters.

In a large industrial plant which I visited in Moscow, I questioned two girl employees as to the wages they received and the hours they worked. The first was employed in turning shells on a lathe. She appeared reluctant to answer me, but when I repeated my question she turned to an official of the plant and spoke with him before telling me she earned 680 roubles a month. Further questions—and references to the plant official by the girl—brought forth the information that her usual wage was 500 roubles per month, but if her machine was working well she could earn 680 roubles per month. She was employed on piece-work and was paid 3 roubles 45 kopeks for every 100 shells she did. She had only been working at the plant for four months.

Calculation will disclose that the information given me by this girl was false. On the piece-work scale for 100 shells she would have to turn out no less than  $74\frac{1}{2}$  an hour to earn the higher wage or  $54\frac{1}{2}$  per hour to earn the lower amount given.

The second girl was also employed on a lathe, but in the machine tool section of the plant. The official from the other department who had so ably assisted the first girl with her answers was not in sight and the second girl did not hesitate to answer me. I learned that she worked eleven hours a day, six days a week. Sometimes she would earn nearly 300 roubles a month, but she had to pay back to the plant out of her earnings each month 180 roubles for her food and room. She had been employed continuously on the same job for eight months.

I mention these two cases merely to show how difficult it is to obtain reliable information about Soviet wage payments and conditions. The first girl's work was obviously less skilled and not so important as the second girl's work and she was not so experienced, yet she told me she earned twice as much as the second girl.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOVIET "DEMOCRACY"

#### *The Stalin Constitution*

IN November 1936 what is now known as the Stalin Constitution was adopted in the U.S.S.R. and was hailed by Communist Party members in and out of Russia as "the most democratic Constitution in the world". Within the U.S.S.R., propaganda designed to convince the Soviet citizens of this is continuously pumped out from propaganda agencies.

It is true that the Constitution gave the Soviet citizen his first opportunity for over two decades to attend a polling booth on election day and cast a vote. For the great majority of citizens this right was undoubtedly a democratic gain even if they were restricted in their choice of how and for whom to vote.

There does not appear to be much doubt that quite large numbers of Soviet citizens accept as true the statement that only in the Soviet Union does such a democratic method of election exist. In a country where it is impossible to become informed of customs of people in other countries, other than those the authorities from time to time deem fit to publish, it is quite natural that many people would accept the statements and propaganda of their leaders, particularly when it would be dangerous to differ with them.

#### *The First Elections*

On 11 December 1937, the eve of the first elections held under the Stalin Constitution, Stalin delivered a speech at a meeting of voters of the Stalin Electoral Area in the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow—his first and only speech during the campaign—in which he said:\*

The forthcoming elections are not merely elections, comrades, they are really a national holiday of our workers, our peasants, and our intelligentsia. Never in the history of the world have there been such really free and really democratic elections—never! History knows no other example like it. The point is not that our elections will be universal, equal, secret, and direct, although that fact in itself is of great importance. The point is that our universal elections will be carried out as the freest elections and the most democratic of any country in the world.

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\* Published by the Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U.S.S.R., Moscow, 1937.



The speech actually contained little of importance and was confined to approximately 2000 words. It was, however, given great publicity and published widely throughout the whole country following the 1937 elections. During the early stages of the 1946 elections the Ukrainian Publishing House alone printed no less than 100,000 copies of this old speech.

The recompense for spending so much money in reprinting this speech was undoubtedly the value expected to be obtained from the quotation given above. If Stalin said they were the most democratic elections in the world, then this must be so. If Stalin said, "History knows no other example like it", then it must be so. Of course any person from a country where democratic elections are held who witnessed the conduct of a Soviet election must agree that history knows no other example like it, for undoubtedly Soviet elections are unique.

### *Real Democracy*

It should be remembered that patent rights to interpret the word "democracy" are not vested in countries outside the U.S.S.R. If one accepts Molotov's interpretation of "democracy" in a speech delivered in 1936 in support of the Stalin Constitution, then one must adjust one's ideas about the meaning of democracy and what it stands for. Molotov said:\*

The great Lenin taught us that "in the Soviet system democracy and dictatorship are not contradictory", that the consolidation of the proletarian dictatorship signifies the growth of real democracy, democracy of the masses, democracy of the toilers.

While I do not wish to say that Lenin did not make that statement, the probability is that the quotation, if investigated, is Molotov's interpretation of Stalin's interpretation of Lenin's interpretation of Marxian political philosophy.

It is, however, significant that Molotov claims that the consolidation of the Soviet dictatorship signifies the growth of real democracy. In a further statement made by him during that speech, he explained the policy of the famous Stalin Constitution in regard to the nomination of candidates for deputies. He said:

These changes in the electoral system show that we are adopting and transferring to our country all that is best in the democratic systems of other States and are applying it to the conditions of the Soviet State. *The only thing we reject is the right of legality for other political parties besides the Party of Communism.*

The Parliamentary elections which followed the adoption of the Stalin Constitution (December 1937) resulted in a complete victory

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\* *The Constitution of Socialism.* Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U.S.S.R., Moscow, 1937.

for the candidates of the Communist non-Party bloc in both Houses of the Parliaments. This victory was repeated the following year in the elections to the Parliaments of the Union Republics (June 1938).

The winning of every electorate by the candidates of the Communist non-Party bloc was, however, no great accomplishment when it is considered that in no case was more than one candidate permitted to stand for any particular electorate, thereby reducing the electors' vote to one of "for" or "against" the only candidate.

### *Pigs Might Fly*

Molotov's statement that there is no legal right for any political party other than the Communist Party to exist in the U.S.S.R. might appear to be weakened by the fact that there were non-Party candidates in the elections, that they had—in theory at any rate—been selected by Trade Unions and other organizations and were now deputies in both Houses of the Parliaments and might decide to vote against the proposals put forward by Communist Party leaders, thereby embarrassing, if not weakening, Communist Party control. Such a state of affairs in the Soviet Parliaments is, however, impossible. Every care is exercised in the selection of candidates for deputies to ensure that each candidate is a willing and obedient tool of the Communist Party at all times and in all circumstances. To realize this there is no need to go further than the analysis made by Stalin during his election speech on 9 February 1946 in the Bolshoi Theatre, when he spoke of the relationship between the Party and the non-Party candidates who, together formed the Communist non-Party bloc. On that occasion Stalin told his audience that the Communist Party was not participating alone in the forthcoming elections, but was joining in a bloc with non-Party candidates. He proceeded to allay the growing fears of his audience by describing how these candidates live and work together, and he wound up this part of his speech by saying, "The only difference between them is that some are in the party while others are out".\*

In his election speech Molotov made it perfectly clear that he was not afraid of any candidate being returned as a deputy who would oppose the "powers-that-be":†

There are some people abroad who might dream that it would be a good thing if another party other than the Communist Party were to achieve power in the Soviet Union. To such people I reply, "pigs might fly!"

Anyone who has made a study of Soviet election methods knows this reply of Molotov's to be quite reasonable and logical, as will be shown later. The important point is that Molotov made such a

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\* *Pravda*, 10 February 1946.

† *Ibid*, 7 February 1946.

statement, and that it affirms what he said previously about there being no right for opposition political parties to exist.

### *Stalin's Purges*

The Stalin Constitution was never in fact intended by the Soviet dictatorship to be more than a political hoax to be perpetrated on Soviet citizens. Coming as it did right after the terrific purges and reign of terror that had shaken the country from top to bottom, it was an ingenious piece of political propaganda by Party controllers.

The fact that such large numbers of people voted for the Communist non-Party bloc candidates demonstrates the hold exercised by the Communist Party over the people rather than the free expression of the people's will or their agreement with the Party's policy.

Possibly one could not find a more forceful indication of this fact than that given by Stalin himself when addressing the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party in March 1939. He denounced foreign Press correspondents for reporting that the purges were demoralizing the people, and to prove his claim that such stories were drivel he said:\*

Who needs this miserable band of venal slaves, of what value can they be to the people, and whom can they demoralize? In 1937 Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Oborevich and other fiends were sentenced to be shot. After that the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. were held. In these elections 98·6 per cent of the total vote was cast for the Soviet power. At the beginning of 1938 Rosengoltz, Rykov, Bukharin and other fiends were sentenced to be shot. After that the elections to the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics were held. In these elections 99·4 per cent of the total vote was cast for the Soviet power. Where are these symptoms of "demoralization", we would like to know, and why was this "demoralization" not reflected in the results of the elections?

### *Election Results*

Under regulations governing the conduct of elections in the U.S.S.R. there must be a majority of registered voters participating in the ballot in the respective electorates in order to make the ballot valid. Should less than half the registered voters in any electorate not record their votes on election day, such ballot is regarded as null and void and a further ballot must take place within fourteen days.

It is this regulation that provides the principal driving force of the Communist Party and its agitators during election time to ensure that every person eligible to vote, who has been registered as a voter, actually does vote on election day. The fact that the

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\* *Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.* Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1939



Party, as such, is held by the general public more in fear than in respect accounts for the large numbers attending the booths to record their votes.

So keen was the work of the Party and its agitators in the Stalin electorate during the 1937 elections that when results of that particular electorate came out Stalin had received more than 100 per cent of the registered votes. This election phenomenon was explained by the claim that Stalin was so popular that many people came in from other electorates to vote for him. (Under the Soviet method of voting a traveller votes for the candidate of the particular area in which he happens to be on election days—a convenient provision for parliamentary elections.)

Following the outbreak of war in 1939 the Soviet, by devious means, succeeded in having new Governments formed in the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, and finally each of those States was taken over by the Soviet. The elections in these countries (held with the assistance of the Soviet N.K.V.D. in June 1940) resulted in a magnificent victory for candidates of "The Union of Toiling People".

This victory was obtained by the simple method of allowing candidates of "The Union of Toiling People" only to face the elections, despite the fact that thirteen other Parties submitted candidates for the elections. All of them had their candidature rejected by the Soviet-controlled Electoral Commission.

The extent to which fear and coercion can bring about an apparent singleness of mind in Parliamentary elections is seen from the following table of results of elections conducted by Soviet "democratic" methods:

ELECTION RESULTS

<i>Year</i>	<i>Elections</i>	<i>Total number of Registered Voters</i>	<i>Percentage of Voters Participating</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Votes Cast that Went to Candidates of Communist Non-Party Bloc</i>
1937	Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.	94,000,000	96.8	98.6
1938	Supreme Soviets of the Union Re- public	92,000,000	99.4	99.4
1940	Lithuania	1,386,000	95.5	92.2
1940	Latvia	1,179,649	94.7	97.6
1940	Estonia	591,032	81.6	92.9
1946	Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.	101,717,686	99.7	99.18

*A Serious Test for the Party*

All the elections where Soviet influence was the governing factor were single candidate elections. A citizen wishing to vote for the only candidate received a ballot paper containing the candidate's name from the official in the polling booth; he then folded the ballot paper over and dropped it into the ballot box. If an elector wished to vote against the candidate he did so by crossing out the name on the ballot paper before dropping it into the ballot box.

In the recent Mongolian plebiscite, however, the procedure was rather different. Here the voter was required to mark his ballot paper to show his wish either for or against Mongolian independence, so another method had to be devised in order to check the voters' intention.

For a race of backward people, the Mongolians have devised quite a neat method of recording votes. The elector is required to place a cross against his choice *and then to sign his name at the bottom of the ballot paper before putting it into the ballot box.*

Needless to say the result of this plebiscite was a foregone conclusion. Of the people eligible to participate in the plebiscite 97.8 per cent did so, and there was not one single vote against Mongolian independence. On 23 October 1945 *Pravda* reported these wonderful results, saying that although the plebiscite was a serious test for the Party, and Government apparatus of the country, it could be said that they had passed this examination with distinction.

*Parliaments at Work*

The Soviet Parliament consists of two houses, the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities. *Izvestiya* of 14 December 1945 published an article by one Professor S. Kravchuk explaining the construction of the Soviet Parliament. He said: "The two-chamber system of the U.S.S.R. is something new in the history of the world." If he meant that the Soviet two-chamber system merely followed directions given by a higher authority within the U.S.S.R., then the system is "something new in the history of the world", and indicates the extent to which Soviet citizens are kept in ignorance of the political affairs of the outside world.

Deputies to the Soviet Parliament are elected for four years. According to article 46 of the Constitution the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet is required to call the deputies into session twice a year. The forcing of the Soviet Union into war by Hitler's attack of June 1941 resulted in the postponement of Parliamentary elections for the duration of the war. Elections should have taken place in December 1941, but were postponed by special decrees issued each year during the war.

Wartime conditions were undoubtedly responsible for the Presi-

diums failure to call the deputies into session as required under article 46. Only four sessions were held during the whole war period. Each was designed purely for political and propaganda reasons. The first session was to ratify the alliance between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. against Germany; it was designed as a morale builder and no doubt served a good purpose as such. The second session was to ratify the budgets of the U.S.S.R. for each of the war years and was designed to show the world that the Soviet Union, in spite of great losses in the war, was the first country to commence planning for peacetime development on a large scale; the third session was to ratify proposals to give the Union Republics the right to enter into international treaties as independent States and to maintain their own armies; this session had a long range policy designed to give the Soviet Union greater representation in international gatherings than it would have had otherwise. The fourth session was to ratify the law on demobilization and was undoubtedly designed to create the impression that large-scale demobilization was to take place immediately in the U.S.S.R. armed forces so that the necessary groundwork could be created for Soviet agents and followers abroad to start campaigns for immediate large scale demobilization.

A person with an elementary knowledge of politics and Parliamentary procedure has only to attend one session of the Supreme Soviet to appreciate fully the farce of Soviet Parliamentary "democracy". Here one finds over 1200 deputies from all parts of the U.S.S.R. Maurice Thorez, the French Communist Party leader, was also present at one session. Many of the deputies travelled thousands of miles from and back to their homes to attend the session so that they could applaud and hold up their hands at the right time.

It is doubtful whether any of the deputies were any the wiser on returning home, particularly those who attended the third session, which gave the respective Union Republics power, in theory, to enter international relationships with outside countries and to form their own armies. This session opened in the customary manner. Everybody in the hall rose at the entry of members of the Presidium at the back of the hall. All applauded enthusiastically, especially when Stalin, dressed in his uniform of Marshal of the U.S.S.R., made his entrance. Members of the Presidium, including Stalin, heartily joined in with this spontaneous welcome until the chairman of the session (A. A. Andreyev) considered the applause had served its purpose. He then cut it off by pressing a button on his table to set an amplified bell ringing.

Molotov was the first speaker, and in a read speech lasting forty minutes he laid down the basis for the adoption by the session of new laws which allowed the Union Republics to form their own



armies—a job which they have not tackled up to the present and are not likely to attempt while the present regime lasts—and to enter into international matters as independent States. Molotov was followed by deputies from Lithuania and Azerbaijan Republics. The deputy for Lithuania gave wholehearted support to the proposal spreading his support over almost as many pages as Molotov. His speech lasted thirty minutes. The deputy for Azerbaijan took twenty minutes to read out his unflinching support of Molotov's proposal. At the conclusion of the final round of applause the session adjourned for twenty minutes.

The first speaker called to the rostrum after the interval was the deputy from Latvia. He was followed by five other speakers from various Republics, each of whom supported the proposal in speeches lasting approximately twenty minutes. After the last speech the chairman announced that the vote would be taken and asked all those in favour to show their hand. Up went the hand of every deputy. The chairman then proceeded to take the vote on the question, asking the deputies to the Soviet of the Union to vote first, followed by the deputies to the Soviet of Nationalities. In each case a unanimous vote was recorded in favour of the motion as submitted by Molotov.

Each speaker at that session had his speech carefully prepared beforehand, and, I would say, prepared *for* him, not *by* him. In the eight speeches delivered by the deputies—other than Molotov—there was no repetition, with the exception of references to Stalin.

It was quite obvious that the speakers had been chosen beforehand. At no time did a deputy other than the one whose turn it was, rise in his seat. None of them attempted to attract the eye of the chairman in any way to obtain permission to speak on the subject matter before the session. Nor was there any confusion in the order in which the speakers were to address the gathering. With the conclusion of one speaker's address, the next would rise and proceed to the rostrum. He would take his written speech from his pocket and calmly arrange it on the rostrum while awaiting the announcement of his name and the Republic he represented.

This method no doubt freed the chairman from any suspicion of favouritism in the order of his calling on the speakers, and since the Soviet Parliaments are merely rubber stamps for the real rulers of the U.S.S.R., it hardly matters who speaks or in what order. The deputies would have had a trip to Moscow and back, and some wholesome food while in Moscow and so gained some advantage from the visit.

At intervals in each address glowing references were made to Stalin—a signal for applause—and every speech wound up with

a paean of praise for "Our Great and Glorious leader, teacher, father, and friend, the great Stalin", or words to that effect.

I noticed that it was not for the listeners to determine when and at what part of the speech they were to applaud, although on a couple of occasions some delegate attempted to gate-crash in leading the applause. His efforts died almost at birth, however, for he did not have that spontaneous co-operation that a speaker obtains from his audience.

There is much to be learned from the Soviet Parliaments, by public speakers, especially politicians, in the matter of obtaining appreciation for one's points, even if only for later Press publicity. The method is quite simple and, from the speaker's point of view, most satisfactory. On arriving at a point where he thinks his audience should applaud, the speaker does not make the usual mistake of pausing to wait for the applause that might not come. The Soviet speaker pauses and leads the applause, thereby assuring it. Of course he has the advantage of knowing that he is the chosen speaker and that his audience has been trained to follow the lead given and probably would not dare to let such a lead pass without responding, for fear of reprisals.

There is one drawback to this arrangement—the speaker has no say in stopping the applause. That function belongs to the chairman of the session. It is during these bursts of applause that a Soviet chairman displays the control he exercises over his meeting. When he considers it has gone on long enough, the chairman presses a button to start an amplified bell ringing throughout the hall and the applause stops as though switched off.

The cameramen have not been idle during this Parliamentary circus. Movie cameras and powerful Klieg lights are to be seen, and hordes of newspaper cameramen are taking shots of the vast assemblage, speakers etc., especially during the applause. These pictures are published in newspapers and periodicals and shown in Soviet cinemas, and are sent abroad as proof of Soviet democracy.

In addition to the matter introduced by Molotov there was at this particular session the business of nomination and election of a Vice-President of the Supreme Soviet. Needless to say there was but one nomination submitted, that of Shvernik. The Supreme Soviet, to a man, voted for him. This important session of the Supreme Soviet began at 7 p.m. on 1 February 1945 and ended at 11.5 p.m. on the same evening.

### *Conducting an Election Campaign*

With the capitulation of Japan, the way was open for the second election under the Stalin Constitution. On the morning of 7 October 1945 all Soviet papers published a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, fixing the election date as 10 February 1946.

I had earnestly hoped that elections would take place before my term of office expired so that I might study the methods and machinery at first hand. Now I was about to have my curiosity satisfied. In my wildest ideas about Soviet elections never did I anticipate the extent to which the authorities were prepared to go in the conduct of this gigantic election fraud.

The announcement of the polling date was the signal for the opening of the campaign. It was to grow in volume and activity from then until the day of the voting and carry over into an after-election campaign to celebrate the election victory.

All candidates were carefully handpicked and approved by the Communist Party. In no electorate was there more than one candidate, thus ensuring that the candidates would be elected unopposed. This campaign, waged throughout the length and breadth of the U.S.S.R., assumed fantastic proportions. Many millions of badly needed roubles and materials were squandered in an effort to convince the world of the democratic nature of these elections.

Special regulations were issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet shortly after the announcement of the election date. Under these regulations all persons eighteen years of age and over on election day were eligible to vote. Persons twenty-three years of age and over on election day were eligible for nomination as deputy by one of the numerous Communist Party controlled and directed organizations; lists of persons eligible to vote were to be prepared by the respective Soviets of each area; a Central Electoral Commission consisting of fifteen people was to be established, also numerous Electoral Commissions for precincts throughout the country for both Houses of the Parliament.

In short, the regulations provided for every aspect of an election campaign and from them it can be seen that only the trusted people can occupy any official position in the conduct of elections; that the requisite number of candidates is nominated as deputies, each such nominee owing allegiance to Communist Party policy; and that every available elector casts his or her vote for the only candidate.

The Central Electoral Commission consists of a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and twelve members. Article 36 chapter v of the *Statute on Elections* 1945-6 provides that they must be nominated by any one or more of the following organizations or gatherings: Trade Unions, co-operatives, Communist Party and youth organizations registered in accordance with the procedure established by law as well as meetings of workers and other employees in enterprises, servicemen in the Army units; meetings of peasants in collective farms, villages, and volosts, and of workers and other employees of state farms.

It will be seen that there is a very wide field from which to



nominate candidates for the Central Electoral Commission. (It might be mentioned that the nomination of candidates as deputies is also reserved to the nominating bodies referred to above.) One would expect some competition for a position, but apparently the Soviet workers, peasants, and intellectuals are on the one level when it comes to a choice of candidates for the Central Electoral Commission, because only the required number were nominated—not that it would have mattered in this case if more than the required number had been nominated, for though the regulations provide for the nomination of members of this and each other Commission that will operate in the elections, they do not provide for the election of members to the Central and other Electoral Commissions.

The explanation of this omission may lie in the fact that under the regulations all persons nominated as members of any of these Electoral Commissions must first be approved by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. This organization would undoubtedly make it very uncomfortable—to say the least—for members of any organization who attempted to "buck" the Party ticket for nominees. However, the fact remains that no more than the required number of people were nominated for any of the thousands of Electoral Commissions throughout the U.S.S.R. Whatever the cause, one must pay tribute to an organization that can and does produce—as a magician produces rabbits from a hat—just the right number and no more.

It did, however, strike me as more than a coincidence that at hundreds of meetings held simultaneously—sometimes thousands of miles apart—of members of such numerically strong organizations as are entitled to participate, the speakers supported the candidature of the same person. This single-mindedness is to be found when the time comes to nominate candidates for deputies. In the nomination of candidates, however, something a little different is encountered. Every member of the Politbureau from Stalin down is nominated in several electorates.

Of course, the first nomination is that of Comrade Stalin. Reports from several electorates of meetings nominating him for those particular electorates, are given great prominence in the daily Press. Similar reports are published of nominations of fellow members of the Politbureau. Thus one finds the people of quite a few electorates having the one mind, so that Stalin, Molotov, Beria, or some other members of the Politbureau, are the candidates for various electorates, emphasizing that fact by numerous meetings unanimously approving such nominations.

Then comes a public announcement signed by every member of the Politbureau, saying in effect that as a person can only nominate in one electorate, it would not be possible to accept nomination in

numerous electorates. So they—"as good Communists"—consult the Central Committee of the Party which tells them to nominate in the several electorates respectively.\*

It might be thought that, with the unanimous approval of Stalin and his Politbureau colleagues in dozens of different electorates in which they would now not stand as candidates, some differences of opinion would occur about the next best person to nominate. But not once was there any difference of opinion. The new candidate received the same unanimous approval as had Stalin, and Molotov and company before them.

To those who have not closely followed political developments in the U.S.S.R. over the past few years, the nomination of ministers of religion as deputies in several electorates must have come as a great surprise. It must also have surprised a large number of Communist Party members who for years had worked for the destruction of religion. They now found themselves agitating for the return as deputies of people who twelve months earlier would probably have been cast into concentration camps for having the audacity to nominate candidates.

Whatever the cause of this single-mindedness in regard to deputies to the Soviet Parliaments, the fact remains that every candidate for deputy is a Communist Party candidate who can be relied upon to faithfully carry out at all times the directions of the Party. In not one electorate were electors given the opportunity to vote for other than the single candidate submitted by the Communist Party. Nomination of deputies did not commence until January 1946, but from the announcement of the election date in October 1945 organizations of the Communist Party were busy on election propaganda. With the assistance of their subsidiary organizations they turned loose upon the community large bodies of agitators to convince it of the democratic nature of the elections, and to impress upon it that it was their "holy" duty to attend polling booths on election day and cast their votes for the candidates of the Communist non-party bloc.

Special schools were immediately established throughout the country, for the training of agitators, where they were instructed in the means of explaining the Statute on the Elections to the people and in other agitational work required of them.

*Trud*, the Trade Union paper, reported on 13 October three days after the announcement of the election date: "At the majority of factories and undertakings, agitators informed their listeners of the matter contained in the Statute, and replied to many questions."

I do not think any person knows the exact number of agitators

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\* *Pravda*, 9 January 1946.

in this election campaign, but it was apparent very early in the campaign that quite a large army of them were employed, as can be understood from the few references following: *Pravda*, on 14 October 1945, reported 400 agitators at a meeting in the Dzerzherski Rayon and 300 at a meeting in the Sokolnicheski Rayon. *Izvestiya*, on 18 October 1945, reported over 2000 agitators having gone to work in the Minsk workshops and enterprises. *Pravda*, on 20 October 1945, reported over 2000 agitators having gone to work among the collective farm workers in the Kalinin district, and over 10,000 explaining the Statute in the factories and farms of the Zaporozhe district. *Pravda*, on 21 October 1945, reported 4000 agitators explaining the Statute in Chkalov (in the Karalian Finnish Republic). *Izvestiya*, on 26 October 1945, reported 3000 agitators at work in the factories at Ufa. *Pravda*, on the same date, reported 400 agitators working in Voroshilovgrad. *Pravda* on 20 December 1945, reported 6724 agitators working in Lvov.

One could go on and on recording large figures of agitators reported to be working in different parts of the U.S.S.R., but in the foregoing references alone no less than 46,824 agitators are reported to be in nine districts or towns. When one realizes that there are 682 electoral districts, one should have a little idea of the extent to which agitators were at work.

In addition to this vast army of agitators there are also the members of the various Electoral Commissions. Apart from the central Electoral Commissions, there are Electoral Commissions for each district, Area Electoral Commissions and Precinct Electoral Commissions for each House of Parliament, requiring millions of workers to staff them. The number of persons working in the District Commissions alone totalled 1,500,000\* and to this number must be added those who make up the Area and Precinct Commissions, which undoubtedly would exceed in numbers those in the District Commissions.

In the early stages of the election campaign the main duty of the agitators was to explain to the people their rights under the Statute, which should not have taken a great deal of time, but as the election campaign proceeded the agitators were brought further into the campaign by assisting in the registration of eligible voters in the various electorates, and spreading prepared propaganda at the same time.

During this period apartment houses in the cities and cottages in the villages became centres of continual checking and of propaganda drives to ensure that every resident over 18 years of age was registered as a voter. Great stress was laid on the importance

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\* *Pravda*, 22 November 1945.



of attending the polling booth on election day. Not until each person had attended the polling booth and cast his vote was he free from the attentions of agitators.

Not all Soviet citizens are fooled into the belief that these elections are democratic, but few would dare to make such an admission or have it made public. A Soviet citizen with whom I discussed the one-candidate method claimed that few intelligent citizens were impressed by Party talk about the democratic nature of the elections, but he said, "By going along to vote it saves one from a lot of unpleasantness afterwards in one's apartment house or place of employment. It is safer, anyway." A Party member admitted to me that there was nothing democratic in the one-candidate elections, but qualified it by saying, "One day it will be different."

Towards the end of the election campaign the Press, which had from the beginning devoted volumes of space to election matters, published messages to electors from leaders or executives of various organizations. All of them stressed the democratic nature of the elections and the electors' duty to vote. The message from the Central Committee of the Communist Party was most significant. It provided the groundwork for regarding as "against the Soviet State" any person who did not vote for the candidate of the Communist non-party bloc. In the U.S.S.R. this is a serious political offence. This message stated:\*

Those who wish that the great victory won by the bloodshed of our people may be firmly established, those who wish to ensure the security of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., those who support the Soviet foreign policy which consistently defends the State's interests of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., and throughout the world, will vote for the candidates of the Communist and non-Party bloc.

Then, just to force home their point, the message concluded:

The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party calls upon all electors as one man to register their votes on 10 February 1946. There must not be a single elector who does not make use of his right to vote for deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

This final clause makes it perfectly clear to each Party member and agitator that it is his job to ensure that this call of the Central Executive is fulfilled in its entirety.

There can be no doubt that the agitators would not hesitate to impress on every potential voter the importance of the words contained in this Party message. One does not have to live for long in the U.S.S.R. to appreciate the effect of such a pronouncement on the general public, especially when their every movement on election days is closely followed until they cast their votes.

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\* *Pravda*, 2 February 1946.

*The Trade Unions' Part*

Throughout the campaign the Soviet Trade Union movement played an important part. All its club houses, Red Corners, theatres, and other places of assembly were, from the announcement of the election date, used entirely for election purposes. The whole movement was more or less converted to a campaign organization.

In most countries where Trade Unions exist, members can expect at election time promises by all parties for better conditions. In some respects the Soviet election campaign entered the usual political flights into the future with promises of "more to come", but the Trade Union movement of the U.S.S.R., rather than make any demands upon the Government, or candidates for deputy, adopted a different line. They urged their members to speed up industry "in honour of the election". Special Socialist emulation campaigns were waged throughout industries and enterprises of the U.S.S.R. Meetings of workers on jobs carried resolutions promising Stalin all sorts of fanciful things that would be performed in honour of the elections.

According to V. V. Kuznetsov, chairman of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, this pre-election production campaign had some remarkable results in production and workmanship, a few of them being:\*

A polisher at the docks joining in the pre-election campaign on the first day did 300 per cent of his daily work tally and the following day he performed 500 per cent of his daily tally.

Steel casters at specified plants exceeded their daily tally by 135 to 140 per cent.

A bricklayer with his brigade layed 121,000 (one hundred and twenty-one thousand) bricks in a single shift.

A worker loading bricks over-fulfilled his daily tally of work by 1500 per cent.

Two women working as glaziers exceeded their daily output by 300 per cent.

*Brightening up the Cinemas*

On 1 January 1946 Moscow cinemas were drawn into the elections. This was scheduled to last until election day. Cinemas were to show only the best of Soviet films, both artistic and scientific. The thirty-six picture theatres of Moscow were to be in it. After ten days of the "best" films they would then show pictures made by twenty-five film units, such as a theme on "The Stalin Constitution", early revolutionary period and historical films, etc., all of which would be illustrated with lectures at the time of showing.

Films featuring Suvorov, Ivan the Terrible, and other notable Tsarist-day figures were also to be shown during the film festival in honour of the elections.

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\* *Trud*, 17 January 1946.

If the campaign did nothing else it certainly brightened up the previously drab cinemas. Cinema proprietors were instructed to do up the outside of their theatres. One in the Metropole Hotel building was held up as an example for others to follow. Soon, placards advertising the programmes appeared at theatre entrances, and many of the theatres received an outside colour wash. The billboards were lit up at night and all went with a swing.

### *Printing Paradox*

State and co-operative publishing houses were brought into the campaign, too. Vast quantities of literature were published in all languages and widely distributed. Mass publication of the Statute on Elections was made in the various languages of the Republics of the U.S.S.R. The Stalin Constitution and Stalin's 1937 election speech were published in sixty-four languages.\*

Hundreds of thousands of placards and election slogans were printed, and all sorts of election propaganda, involving many thousands of tons of paper, was continually coming off the printing presses. As early as October one paper combine alone (the Kuybishev) provided 150 tons of best quality paper for the printing of election matter.†

The postal authorities, not to be outdone, printed five million postcards in honour of the elections. They were artistically designed and served as a reminder to the receiver to attend the polling booth on 10 February 1946 and record his vote in the elections of the Supreme Soviet. They finished up with the slogan "All to the Elections".

I do not know how many tons of paper were used in this election campaign, but, if one is to take as authentic reports appearing from time to time in the *Uchitelskaya Gazeta* (Teachers' Gazette), I do know that the paper used would have served a much better purpose in making good some of the serious shortages of copy and text-books in the schools of the U.S.S.R. Two of the reports were as follows:‡

There are 2600 primary school pupils in the rayon and only 184 books have been received for them.

Although there were 750 children entering the first classes there was not one text-book in the school for them.

Shortly after the announcement of the election date, Moscow started to brighten up by the establishment of agitational points and election precincts, complete with red bunting on which was printed in gold letters particulars of the precinct or agitational point.

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\* *Izvestiya*, 30 November 1945.

† *Trud*, 27 October 1945.

‡ *Uchitelskaya Gazeta*, no. 37-40, September 1945.



To these points the agitators would come daily for instruction, and nightly discussions would take place concerning reports delivered on work performed that day.

Agitational points and election precincts were established every couple of hundred yards along almost every street of Moscow. To add to the gaiety of these places many thousands of photographs or paintings of Stalin were displayed outside them, in shop windows, and, as the campaign neared its climax, on every prominent building in the city.

### *Never the Lights Shall Dim*

In the centre of the city of Moscow portraits of Stalin with his colleagues of the Politbureau were prominently displayed. In some cases profiles of Stalin in fluorescent lighting adorned the tops of high city buildings. Some of Stalin's portraits were up to twenty feet in height. Never before had I witnessed photography and painting of the one individual on such a scale. Wherever one turned, day or night, one would find a photograph, a picture, or a painting of Stalin.

Special lighting provisions were made to keep this gigantic open air Stalin art gallery fully visible at all times. The larger portraits were surrounded with chains of small electric lights or with powerful floodlights. The pictures in shop windows also had special lighting effects. The irony of all this glorification of the individual is the fact that Moscow did not have sufficient electric power to maintain at the same time the special lighting of Stalin's pictures and the lighting of all workers' rooms. The consequence was that current in apartment houses was cut off for hours on end, sometimes all night, in order that Stalin's pictures might be lit up continuously. This cutting off of current from apartment houses did not, of course, affect all apartment houses at the same time, but every group of workers' apartments at some time or other during the election campaign, undoubtedly had its current off for some hours at least.

Soviet elections such as I witnessed involved the expenditure of many millions of roubles, many millions of valuable manpower hours, millions of metres of valuable cloth, thousands of tons of newsprint and paper, and large quantities of valuable timber. All of it could have been used to much better advantage in giving the people more consumer goods, better housing, and text-books for the school children. Irrespective of happenings in the election campaign, the results of the elections would have been the same as the Communist Party intended them to be, and in any case the deputies to the Soviet Parliament—with the exception of those who are members of the Politbureau—are merely the tools of the real rulers of the U.S.S.R.—the Politbureau working under and through Stalin.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE COMMUNIST PARTY

#### *How to Become a Member*

THE Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. is not the governing body of the Soviet Union, although at all times it plays a most important part in carrying into effect the decisions of the real rulers of that country, and materially assists in the Soviet's administration.

Up to the time of the Eighteenth Congress of the Party (March 1939) membership of the Party was rather difficult to acquire. Alterations made to the rules in 1934 stipulated that candidates would be placed in one of four categories, with two different periods of probation. Under these rules the categories and probationary periods were:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Class of Worker or Applicant for Membership</i>	<i>Probationary Period</i>
First	Industrial workers with a production record of not less than five years	12 months
Second	Industrial workers with a production record of less than five years, agricultural workers, Red Army men, farm workers or collective farmers and engineers and technicians working directly in shops or sectors	24 months
Third	Collective farmers, members of handicraft or artisan artels and elementary school teachers	24 months
Fourth	All other workers	24 months

Candidates for Party membership in the first category were required to have their nominations supported by recommendations made by three members, each with five years' standing in the Party. Those for the second category needed supporting recommendations from five members of five years' standing. Third category candidates needed recommendations from five members of five years' standing in the Party, plus the recommendation of the representative of the political department of a machine tractor station or the District Committee of the party. Those in the fourth category

needed recommendation from five members of ten years' standing in the Party.

The fact that a worker had the necessary qualifications for admittance to candidate membership of the first category did not mean that under all circumstances he would remain in that category, for it depended on the advance made in his status in the factory or place of employment.

At the time of the great boost of Stakhanovism, a worker in a Leningrad shoe factory named Smetanin, who had established a production record that earned for him the title of Stakhanovite and who shortly after earning that title was promoted to the position of shop superintendant, was removed from the first category candidate list and placed in the second category. A little later when he took over the position of director of the plant, he was relegated to fourth category membership.

Smetanin's experience was that of many other hurriedly promoted Stakhanovites of Soviet industry. His case and numerous others were quoted by A. Zhdanov in support of the proposed amendment to the rules before the Eighteenth Party Congress.

It was this Congress that altered the rules as suggested by Zhdanov and abolished the different categories for membership and the different qualifications of members nominating a person as candidate.

New rules for admission to the Party require that a nomination be made by three members of the Party with not less than three years' membership, who have personal knowledge of not less than one year of the applicant and his team-work. The rules also provide: "Persons recommending bear responsibility for the soundness of their recommendation."

If one is to read this latter provision with the words of Stalin, quoted by Zhdanov at the Eighteenth Congress, nomination is not something to be taken lightly. Stalin is quoted by Zhdanov as having said:\*

The Party has become a big and serious thing to Party members, and joining the Party or being expelled from the party is a crucial event in a man's life. . . . Whether he remains in the Party or is expelled from the Party is a matter of life and death to the ordinary Party member.

### *Purging the Party*

The terrific purges that have taken place in the Party from time to time have given full weight to those words of Stalin. While mass purges were abandoned in 1938 there is every indication that they will again take place should Stalin finally realize the

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\* A. Zhdanov, *Amendments to the Rules of the C.P.S.U. (B)*. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1939.



futility of attempting to force his version of democracy down the throats of peoples of other countries.

"Purging" of the Communist Party has taken place at intervals since 1921, culminating in the terrific purges and liquidations between 1933 and 1938.

It is, however, of interest to note some of the figures of Party membership within the U.S.S.R. and the results of the purges over different periods of time.

In 1921, before the first great purge took place, total membership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was 660,000, including the candidate members. After the first purge no less than 175,000, or over a quarter of that total membership, had been purged from the Party.

From this time on, purging was carried out at different intervals throughout institutes, in rural areas, etc., until 1929 when the backwash of the Stalin-Trotsky fight for control resulted in a further great purging of those then regarded as Trotskyites. From 1929 till 1933 there was comparative quiet as far as mass purging was concerned, and Party membership in 1933 had actually increased by 1,400,000. This growth was undoubtedly due to Stalin's desire to impress on the workers that his fight against Trotsky had been on their behalf. Admission to the Party was now encouraged.

The honeymoon of Stalin and the workers was, however, a short lived one. In 1934 the rules were amended to make admission to membership difficult. Following the amendments, a further purging took place, which removed a large number not only from the Party but from all further interest in life. At the Seventeenth Party Congress in February 1934 total membership of the Party was 1,874,488. This figure, it will be noted, is only slightly in excess of the increase in Party membership as quoted above and it gives some indication of the severity of the earlier purges.

The Seventeenth Congress took place at a time when the purges that commenced in 1933 were just beginning to get under way. They continued at a high tempo until May 1935, when admission of new members to the Party began again and continued until 1 November 1936. By this time there were very few of the old Communist Party leaders left.

The effects of the purges between 1933 and 1936 can best be judged from a report by Stalin to the Eighteenth Congress on 10 March 1939. Speaking of these great purges, Stalin said:\*

As the result of all these measures, the Party succeeded in weeding out chance, passive, careerist, and directly hostile elements, and in selecting the most staunch and loyal elements. It cannot be said that the purge was

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\* J. Stalin, *Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B)*. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1939.

not accompanied by grave mistakes. There were unfortunately more mistakes than might have been expected. Undoubtedly we shall have no further need of resorting to the method of mass purges. Nevertheless, the purge of 1933-6 was unavoidable and its results, on the whole, were beneficial. The number of Party members represented at this, the Eighteenth Congress, is about 1,600,000 which is 270,000 less than were represented at the Seventeenth Congress. But there is nothing bad in that.

These purges were without exception carried out on orders from the top. They included many former prominent high ranking Communist Party officials, including the chief of the N.K.V.D. himself. It shows that while membership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is in itself a social elevation it does not free a person from the fear and terror that grip the hearts of Soviet citizens because of the methods adopted to rid the Party or populace of elements which Stalin or his agents consider dangerous to the regime.

Although I was not in the U.S.S.R. during the mass purges, I learned from people who lived in Moscow then of the fear that possessed almost every Soviet citizen. From the stories I heard, I do not doubt that Stalin was not exaggerating when he said, "There were unfortunately more mistakes than might have been expected."

With the alteration of conditions of admission to membership, as mentioned earlier, instead of restricting or discouraging Party membership, the authorities set out to encourage it. Figures were published in *Bolshevik*, No. 14 of July 1945, which showed the total membership on 1 April 1945, including candidate members, to be 5,800,000 as against 3,800,000 in 1941.

I have not much doubt that this great influx of members is the forerunner of a new and probably more drastic purge than ever before. Indications given from time to time in the Press towards the end of 1945 all pointed to dissatisfaction of the powers-that-be with this enlarged membership. District Committee after District Committee was taken to task through the Press for carelessness in the admittance of new members.

### *Party Organization*

In theory, the Congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. is the highest authority. It elects the Central Committee of the Party, which is charged with the administration of the affairs of the country and of the Party between Congresses. According to the rules these Congresses should be called together not less than once every three years. In practice they are called together at times to suit the will of the higher authorities.

The Central Committee consists of some ninety or so members, plus about the same number of candidate members. It would appear from the reading of the Party rules that members of the Central Committee are not required to submit themselves for re-election at the Congresses of the Party. Unless they fall out with Stalin they are likely to retain their positions at the pleasure of Congress or the Politbureau.

The Politbureau has nine members and five candidate members who are elected by the Central Committee of the Party. There is no need to look beyond the Politbureau for the real government of the country. They control the Communist Party and its many subsidiary organizations, such as the Young Octobrists (embracing children less than eight years old), the Pioneers (children and adolescents between 8 and 16 years) the Komsomol or Communist League of Youth (with members between the ages of 16 and twenty-five).

It is through these different Communist Party organizations that the Soviet Trade Unions, sporting organizations, and every other form of organized activity within the U.S.S.R. are controlled and directed along the lines laid down by the dictatorship of the country through the Central Committee of the Party.

Although the Central Committee is required under the rules to hold Congresses at intervals of not more than three years, there was an interval of five years between the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Congresses which took place in 1934 and in 1939 respectively. There has not been a Congress since 1939 so the three years provision in the rules means little.

In practice, the Congresses, when they do meet, merely follow the lines of the Houses of the Parliaments. The delegates adopt without dispute or question every suggestion placed before them by the Central Committee of the Party. They applaud at appropriate points and laugh or jeer as the case might warrant—in short they make themselves the Party rubber stamp for decisions handed down to the Central Committee through the Politbureau.

I have read through record after record of verbatim speeches made at these Congresses, and without exception I found a complete singlemindedness of ideas. The speeches are obviously carefully prepared beforehand and as in the Houses of Parliaments they end with glowing references to Stalin.

### *The Politbureau*

The present Politbureau of the U.S.S.R., as I have said before, shares the limelight with Stalin at big demonstrations. Large por-



traits of its members adorn buildings in the centre of the city, Stalin's portrait always taking the most prominent place in the array.

The positions held by members of the Politbureau give them the key controlling the whole of the U.S.S.R., as will be seen from the following particulars:

<i>Members of the Politbureau</i>	<i>Positions Held</i>
Stalin, J. V.	General Secretary of the All-Union Communist Party; Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars; Generalissimo of the U.S.S.R.; Chairman of the State Committee for Defence; Member of the Presidium of the U.S.S.R.
Molotov, V. M.	Vice-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars; Commissar of Foreign Trade of the U.S.S.R.; Vice-Chairman of the State Committee for Defence.
Voroshilov, K. E.	Vice-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars; Marshal of the U.S.S.R.; Member of the General Headquarters of the Supreme Command.
Kalinin, M. I.	President of the Supreme Soviet until late 1945.
Kaganovich, L. M.	Commissar of Transport Communications.
Mikoyan, A. I.	Vice-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars; Commissar of Foreign Trade of the U.S.S.R.; Member of the State Committee for Defence; Director of the organization for supplies to the Red Army.
Khrushchev, N. S.	Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Republic; Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian Republic; Lieutenant-General of the Red Army; Member of the South-Western Military Council.
Zhdanov, A. A.	Secretary of the Leningrad District Committee of the Communist Party; Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party; Lieutenant-General of the Red Army; Member of the Leningrad Military Council.
Andreyev, A. A.	A Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party; Commissar for Agriculture; Chairman of the Council of the Union; Chairman of the Party Control Commission of the Central Committee.

<i>Candidate Members of the Politbureau</i>	<i>Positions Held</i>
Shvern timer, N. M.	Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. (since 1945); Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet-Federated Socialist Republic; Chairman of the Council of Nationalities; Chairman of the Extraordinary State Commission of Investigation and Punishment of Crimes Committed by the German Fascist Invaders.
Beria, L. P.	Commissar for Internal Affairs; Commissar for State Security (N.K.V.D.); Vice-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars; Member of the State Committee for Defence.
Malenkov, G. M.	A Secretary of the Central Committee in Charge of Party administration; Member of State Committee for Defence; Chairman of a Special Committee Established by the Council of People's Commissars to Deal with Reconstruction of Liberated Territories.
Shcherbakov, A. (y)	A Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party; A Vice-Commissar for Defence; Colonel-General of the Red Army.
Voznesensky, N.	A Vice-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars; Member of the State Committee for Defence; Chairman of the State Planning Commission.

M. I. Kalinin died in 1946. His place as President of the Supreme Council had been taken in 1945 by Shvern timer.

Shcherbakov died in 1945.

It will be noticed that Stalin holds the key positions in both Party and military fields. While all indications in the U.S.S.R. are that he is Supreme Dictator, it is possible that his dictatorship is exercised through the Politbureau. While in Russia I studied this question as closely as possible and though I have not the slightest doubt that Stalin is the dictator many people believe him to be, I am not convinced beyond doubt that his dictatorship is independent of his fellow members of the Politbureau. I believe the ruthless dictatorship existing in the U.S.S.R. can be narrowed down to Stalin and his eight colleagues of the Politbureau. But if I were a member of that Politbureau I would not like not to see eye to eye with Stalin on political questions concerning the U.S.S.R.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CENSORSHIP HEEL

#### *Kept in the Dark*

ALTHOUGH censorship operated in most countries during the war in varying degrees, it was mainly a wartime measure designed to prevent the enemy obtaining useful information.

Censorship in the U.S.S.R. however, is a horse of quite a different colour. It was not just a wartime measure but part of a deliberately planned policy to suit the political ends of the ruling powers.

Under Soviet censorship comes all, or any, information which might tend to enlighten its people as to the true conditions existing in other countries. At the same time it is used to create a false impression in the minds of peoples outside the U.S.S.R. of the actual state of affairs in Russia itself.

Soviet citizens are denied all information about standards of living, culture, and political and other matters relating to the everyday life of people outside Russia. To formulate opinions on affairs outside their own borders they have to rely solely on Government controlled releases made through the Soviet Press or radio. These releases are, without exception, very cleverly written. It is no wonder that the authorities seem to have had little difficulty in convincing Russian citizens that theirs is the best standard of living and culture in the world. They believe that capitalist States surrounding the U.S.S.R. are afraid of their workers rising and demanding similar conditions and that the capitalists are always endeavouring to hinder the work of the only workers' country in the world, by sabotage and war if necessary.

Not all Soviet citizens are thus deceived, but prior to the outbreak of war there was no doubt that the vast majority of citizens believed the propaganda constantly being disseminated by Press, radio, and agitators.

Since 1917 the U.S.S.R. has been going through an almost continual state of purges and liquidations. With the famines of the early twenties and 1931-2, they reduced the population to a stage where at least 80 per cent of the people are of post-revolutionary birth or were very young children at the time of the revolution. One Soviet writer quite recently claimed that over 50 per cent of



the present population were twenty-one years of age and under.

This, coupled with the constant alertness of the N.K.V.D. and its agents towards anyone complaining of his economic position, makes the average Soviet citizen an easy subject for Communist Party propaganda. The workers have not known better conditions and have no means of studying the social conditions of their own or any other country, except through the political line of the Communist Party.

Their knowledge of economic affairs outside Russia is about on a par with that of the inmates of our mental institutions and jails during the depression period, who did not in any way feel the effects of the depression. In that respect the U.S.S.R. might well be compared with a vast prison or mental home. Its citizens have no opportunity of contrasting their lot in life with that of workers in other countries. They have no opportunity of leaving the U.S.S.R. to seek experience in the outside world, and anyone who thinks that a Soviet citizen is free to do so if he wishes, is either very ignorant of true conditions, or is deliberately deceiving himself. If a citizen of Russia managed to cross the border without Government authority every member of his family over the age of sixteen years would be held responsible for his action and would be thrown into prison. Those who do leave the country are on official Soviet business, and even then every precaution is taken to ensure that they are not contaminated by what they see in other countries. Soviet foreign missions throughout the world are staffed solely by Soviet citizens, from the heads of the missions down to the housemaids. In these missions the N.K.V.D. agent is there to keep a constant check on the movements of all persons attached to them and he deals promptly and effectively with any one who strays from the path selected for him.

Within the U.S.S.R. the only foreign literature permitted is that selected by the authorities. Some of the books reprinted in the U.S.S.R. include several of Jack London's books in which he vividly describes the sordid side of life among the lower classes of America; some of Shakespeare's works; and a few other books by foreign writers. Without exception all these books can be effectively used by Soviet agitators to impress on their audiences the deplorably bad conditions of workers outside Russia. The Lenin Library has a stock of foreign publications, newspapers, periodicals, etc., but intending readers of foreign papers and literature must have a permit from the higher authorities, who issue such permits only to specially selected students.

A visitor to the U.S.S.R. interested in discovering whether Soviet citizens may read foreign literature will probably find students well versed in foreign affairs with access to the foreign publications in the Lenin Library. A visitor may come away from the library con-

vinced that there are no restrictions on such reading. What he does not know, however, is that his every movement in the U.S.S.R. is part of a carefully arranged itinerary. Although at times the itinerary has to be altered to suit the visitor's wishes, this possibility has been foreseen. Students found reading foreign literature in the library and having a good knowledge of matters outside are part of that carefully arranged plan.

On one occasion a friend borrowed a book from me and was sitting reading it in a Moscow Park on a Sunday afternoon. A man came up, sat down and noticing that my friend was reading a foreign book, struck up a conversation. He seemed greatly perturbed at my friend's audacity. After asking the name of the book and its subject he asked, "Do you have permission to read foreign publications?" Needless to say my friend was not a Soviet citizen. If he had been he would not have ventured to read the book so openly.

On another occasion I inspected a hospital in Moscow and had been shown a room where films were exhibited. I offered the director a loan of some Australian documentary films, perfectly harmless films from a propaganda point of view, and giving a fair outline of Australian life. The director accepted my offer and I sent him the films. Some time later they were returned to me, but not by the director of the hospital. The Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (V.O.K.S.) sent them back to me, but not before one of its directors had pleasantly but very pointedly explained to me: "There is a rule in the Soviet Union by which films, books, publications, and any other matters intended for Soviet citizens or institutions must be forwarded to such places or individuals only through V.O.K.S."

Although V.O.K.S. or a Moscow Cinema Committee with its own small theatre may show foreign films to selected people it is not possible for one to invite any Soviet citizen to such a screening. The selected people, carefully chosen, are the only ones permitted to view these films. Occasionally foreign films are shown in the buildings of the diplomatic missions, and certain Soviet citizens are either permitted to view the films there or are prepared to run risks arising out of attending such places.

Another case that comes to my mind was that of a member of the Soviet legal fraternity who, upon being shown some photographs of workers' homes in other countries did not at first believe that the workers could have such houses. After hearing about other conditions in those countries, he accepted the photographs as genuine, saying: "I just cannot understand how it is that such conditions exist for the workers in those countries without our Government knowing of them, for I am sure I would have heard of them before had our Government had knowledge of such conditions existing."

Some days later this man said he had been talking with some

friends, including a Professor from Moscow University, and had told them what he had learned of the good living conditions in those foreign countries. He said his friends doubted whether such conditions could exist, but he assured them he was right for he had seen photographs and other evidences of their standards of living. He said the Professor cut the discussion short by saying, "It is merely capitalist propaganda designed to mislead the Soviet workers." Turning to one of the other men the Professor said, "You should know better than to believe such things. You know as well as I do how photographs can be faked." This remark about faked photographs was a telling one, and merely confirms the fact that the majority of photographs leaving the U.S.S.R. for foreign countries do not give a genuine picture of Soviet conditions.

### *Confiscation of Wireless Sets*

All means of propaganda in the U.S.S.R. are vested in the State. Prior to the Soviet's entry into the war, citizens who were lucky enough to have their own private wireless sets (some citizens had received these for outstanding work for the Soviet), could listen only to Moscow-controlled radio stations. Upon the outbreak of war the authorities ordered the confiscation of every private wireless set in the country—an extreme measure not adopted even by Nazi Germany in occupied territory.

Citizens were not of course left without means of hearing radio news. Large numbers of apartment houses had been wired for the community wireless system and many people possessed speakers. All those with speakers had to listen to the one programme, and that was as the authorities wished. Extension of the house speaker system went on apace with the confiscation of private sets. Installation of speakers had speeded up to such an extent that just before I left Moscow the authorities claimed to have had 1,500,000 installed. The news of this was permitted to be dispatched by foreign Press correspondents, but not in the form that I have given it here. The dispatches were permitted to say that the authorities had provided 1,500,000 wireless sets—but they did not explain that these crudely made speakers could convey only the programme provided by the Soviet.

An interesting feature of the apartment house wirelesses is that they are attached to a different current from the lighting and other electrical systems. Thus the occupant of a room with a speaker could always listen to the radio, but could not always use the electric light, owing to the frequent campaigns in Moscow to save electricity, which sometimes left apartment houses—and foreign missions too—in complete darkness for hours on end.

With the capitulation of Japan the return of private wireless sets was permitted, but although I left Moscow some six months after



that date very few of them had been restored. This was probably caused by inefficiency and red tape in the Soviet administration rather than any particular desire by the authorities to withhold the sets.

No one knows just when, and in what condition, he can expect his private set to be returned. From my own observations of some of the storage places, I should say that few, if any, of the wirelasses will be in working order. They were heaped up like so much junk and, judging by my experience with Soviet workers, would be none too gently treated in the sorting-out process.

### *Exploitation of Foreign Press Correspondents*

Soviet censorship causes a false impression of conditions and events within the U.S.S.R. to be fostered abroad. Foreign Press representatives in Moscow are very often exploited for this purpose. I do not wish to disparage the foreign correspondents who lived and worked under extremely difficult conditions during the two years of my stay there and I have the greatest respect and admiration for the majority of them. They endeavoured to play their part in maintaining that essential unity between the large powers which is so important in wartime. Few of them approved of the manner in which they had to send out their dispatches, but, short of leaving the country, they could do nothing about it.

Practically all the foreign Press correspondents were housed in the Hotel Metropole in Moscow. From their rooms in this Hotel they wrote stirring dispatches of Red Army fighting taken from the columns of the daily Press. When their dispatches showed signs of going off the track agreeable to the Soviet authorities there was always the Soviet censor to correct their mistakes, and, if necessary, to alter their dispatches to make them conform with Soviet policy.

War correspondents in other countries were permitted to go to the front and write from first-hand information. Not so with the correspondents in Moscow. Towards the end of the war, they were taken on specially selected trips into liberated territory where they sent out special dispatches at the wish of the Soviet authorities; but at no time did any of the foreign war correspondents in the U.S.S.R. reach the front lines. These Press correspondents were engaged in a continual battle of wits with the censor, in an effort to word dispatches so as to convey some news of value. There were few opportunities for one correspondent to scoop his comrades, although I remember one rare occasion when this happened. One of the correspondents thought it was about time the Red Army crossed into Poland. So in his dispatch he put the Red Army over the border, expecting the censor to cut this passage out. The censor did not come up to expectations and allowed that part of

the dispatch to stay in. And so it went out to the world that the Red Army had crossed the Polish border a fortnight before this really happened.

Since no organization is permitted within the U.S.S.R. without the approval of the Soviet authorities, British and American correspondents in Moscow who desired to form an Anglo-American Press Correspondents' Association had first to obtain permission from Soviet officialdom before they could have their Association recognized. The Soviet authorities granted permission on condition that only British and American correspondents formed the membership of the Association.

It was to this Association that an American Soviet Friendship League forwarded a lengthy cablegram telling of William S. White's proposal for publication of his book *Report on the Russians*, a condensation of which appeared about that time in the *Readers' Digest*. The cablegram requested that a protest be made by the Anglo-American Press Correspondents' Association of Moscow to appear in America before White's book came off the press. The wording of the protest—a lengthy one—was included in the cable from the League.

It was doubtful at the time whether more than a handful of members of the Moscow Association had read the condensation in the *Readers' Digest*, and yet some of the members of the Association wanted to fall in with the League's suggestion of protesting against something not yet in print. At a meeting called to consider the cablegram, a majority of the members decided against the protest, but this did not deter pro-Soviet members of the Association, who were prepared at any time to go to any lengths to please the Soviet authorities.

Notwithstanding the majority decision of their own Association, these pro-Soviet members circulated a petition of protest against White's book among the Association, branding it as lies and misrepresentation. They had not seen the book, nor had they accompanied White on his journey through the U.S.S.R. They asked each member individually to sign the petition.

Needless to say some of the members did sign. At the Association meeting some had voted against that to which they were now agreeing. It is obvious that they did this in the hope of strengthening their position with the Soviet authorities. This type of conduct has what is known among Moscow foreign Press correspondents as "*visa appeal*". To a correspondent who intends to return at some time to the U.S.S.R. "*visa appeal*" is all-important. Every foreign journalist is carefully investigated by Soviet authorities before he is allowed into the U.S.S.R. Although I did not once hear of a case in which Soviet authorities actually refused to grant an entry *visa* I know of a number of cases in which an entry *visa*

has been refused by the simple process of not answering an application for a *visa*.

### *The Last Strike in Russia*

It was through the Anglo-American Press Correspondents' Association that I learned of the only strike that has occurred over a long period of years in the Soviet Union.

As I have mentioned earlier, foreign Press correspondents were taken from time to time into liberated territory by the Soviet authorities on organized tours. It was in connexion with one of these tours that the strike took place.

The Association was informed that all correspondents would be taken on a tour to liberated territory. Full instructions as to time and place of departure were given. As time wore on the Soviet authorities changed their minds about taking all the correspondents and decided to limit the number to four representatives. This did not meet with the approval of the Association, all of whose members had been looking forward to the trip more as a change from Moscow than from the point of view of news value. A hurried meeting was held and it was decided that "if one goes, all go", or alternatively "all go or none go".

Every effort was made to have Soviet officialdom change its mind and permit all correspondents to make the trip as originally planned, but to no avail. The correspondents knew they were being taken along merely to suit Soviet propaganda purposes, and not because they were favoured. These Press representatives took the view that if the authorities wanted dispatches sent out they must toe the mark and accede to the representatives' demands.

Every member of the Association turned up with full gear at the Soviet airport at the appointed time the following morning and awaited events. They were again told that only the four correspondents for whom arrangements had been made could go. The members delivered an ultimatum to the authorities at the airport and calmly sat down on their gear to await developments. Their action brought the desired results, and the authorities gave in. For the first time for many long years the authorities had to eat humble pie, and for foreigners at that.

Shortly afterwards the authorities decided to give a warning to foreign Press correspondents about this incident, and about the growing resentment of the correspondents at Soviet censorship. They chose for their example probably the most inoffensive of all foreign pressmen in Moscow. He had submitted a dispatch to the censor and on getting it back found it mutilated to such an extent that it was worthless. He tore it up and threw it on the counter in front of the censor telling him that he would not send the dispatch at all.



The effect of his action was the complete withdrawal from him next day of all his privileges as a correspondent. This meant in fact that he would be forced to leave Moscow. This he did on the first available plane.

I mention these occurrences merely to show the difficulties under which these correspondents work and the manner in which the Soviet authorities exploit the "capitalist" Press of outside countries through the Press representatives in Moscow. It is a fact that Communists outside Russia prefer to quote from dispatches by foreign Press correspondents rather than from those by Soviet agencies. Soviet Press correspondents (Tass representatives) in other countries insist on having full freedom to visit war fronts and other places of interest to their Governments to which correspondents are admitted. While a foreign journalist in Moscow must run the gauntlet of very severe censorship, the Tass representative abroad can have any information cut from his dispatches by a censor and cabled home to Moscow through the Soviet mission, thereby assuring his own Government of completely uncensored news.

#### *"Punch" Offends*

For the student of foreign languages in Moscow there are a number of bookshops, including the one known as "The International Bookshop", where works in almost every language may be purchased. Apart from old classics and a few second-hand books of foreign origin most of the books are reprints of speeches and writings used extensively in present-day Soviet propaganda.

In the International Bookshop I came across a bound volume of an English publication for the year 1890, namely *Punch*, which on examination proved to have been subjected to considerable mutilation by the censor. In some places a whole article was completely blotted out with Soviet censorship ink. At 175 roubles this old publication was well beyond the price an ordinary Soviet citizen could afford to pay, yet the Soviet authorities had not taken any chances of one of their citizens being contaminated—even though the matter contained in it belonged to the days of the Tsars.

On my return to Australia I looked up the 1890 volume of *Punch* and found that all the censored items were typical *Punch* criticisms or satires of old Russia.

Childish as it seems, the censorship of these articles is not surprising to one who has lived in the U.S.S.R. and watched its militaristic developments. No opportunity for propaganda in favour of the Soviet State is missed in the preparation of text-books for students of English, now the second language in Soviet schools. Much of it is rather crude, as can be seen by the following quotation from a new revised edition of an English text-book, by I. R.

Galporin and E. B. Shapiro, published by the Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow in 1940:

*Lesson Twenty-two*

There are undergrounds in Moscow, London, New York, and Paris and other large cities. The New York underground is good, the Paris and London undergrounds are *better*. But the Moscow underground is the *best* in the world. England is a highly developed industrial country. There are many factories in England, but there are also many unemployed there. There are not so many unemployed in Holland as there are in England. In the United States there are more unemployed than in England or in Holland.

What the lesson does not tell the student is that the unemployed in Great Britain enjoy a far higher standard of living than the Soviet student who is reading about England's unemployed.

*Warning the Red Army Men*

The extent to which Soviet citizens have been kept in ignorance of conditions outside their own country became very evident when the Red Army was about to break into foreign territory in the Balkans. Just before this, the Press warned Red Army soldiers not to be deceived by the cunning propaganda of the capitalist class which they were likely to encounter on entering foreign soil. According to the Soviet Press, Red Army soldiers would probably see the women dressed in fine clothes, many of them wearing high-heeled shoes, and with painted cheeks and lips, and so on. In short the article described what I would take to be the normal attire of a city girl in most countries outside the U.S.S.R. The Red Army man was advised to beware of this false show of finery, which was all part of Fascist propaganda designed to make him think the conditions of the peoples of those countries were superior to those of his own country.

It was evident that members of the Red Army, and Soviet citizens who had been captured by the Germans and taken to Europe, learned with some surprise of the standards of living beyond U.S.S.R. borders, because attempts were made by Soviet authorities, right up to the time I left Moscow, to counter such impressions in the minds of those citizens who had returned to the U.S.S.R. A leading article in *Krasnaya Zvezda* on 30 December 1944 claimed that great progress had been made in educational work among the troops, but complained of the tendency to ease up on agitational work. After taking the agitators to task for certain shortcomings the article said:

The work of the agitator has, however, become more complicated, the Red Army is now fighting on the territory of other States where other habits and social systems obtain. Far from his mother country the Soviet patriot

remains close to his country but this does not mean that during a prolonged campaign on foreign soil the Soviet warrior does not need enlightenment on certain questions and this can be provided in conversation with the agitators.

The same paper, in its issue of 15 May 1945, again issued a warning of the danger to Soviet troops on foreign territory. In a leading article, it pointed out that while the "Hitlerites" had been defeated in open battle, they would continue to fight the Red Army in other ways. The article ended:

Not only must the men be reminded in their clubs, Red Army Houses, libraries, and at film performances that they are on foreign soil and in the midst of danger, but the leisure time of the men, sergeants and officers, must be provided for. Each club and Red Army house must be such that time can be agreeably spent there.

What *Krasnaya Zvezda* really meant was that Red Army men, if allowed too much freedom in enemy territory, might want the same conditions on return to their own country.

Soviet authorities were careful not to allow the general public to learn about the things some of its citizens had seen. That would upset their carefully planned propaganda about the Soviet workers' conditions. Those unfortunate people who for long periods had been working in German forced labour camps were not permitted to return to their own towns or villages, but were taken to different parts of the U.S.S.R. to undergo what the authorities termed a period of "political re-education".

### *The Germans Run Out of Petrol*

A two-page article in *Sputnik Agitator*, No. 18 of 1945, entitled "Practical Agitation: Talks with Repatriated Soviet Citizens", discloses some of the thoughts in the minds of the unfortunates who have been liberated from German labour camps only to be exiled from their own people again while undergoing this "political re-education":

Everyone should know how our people suffered under the Germans, so that they can tell their children of the horrors of Fascism. Talks and meetings with these repatriated people are most essential, and for them as well.

They are completely lacking in correct political information and many questions need explaining to them; for they have been cut off from their country for so many years and have been poisoned by fascist lies.

They do not know how the Soviet people lived and struggled during the war, nor how they overcame Germany; some of them say, "The Red Army won because of the Allies or because the Germans ran out of petrol."

It seems a little harsh to accuse Russian citizens who have been confined to German labour camps of being poisoned with German



lies, as the writer of this article does. But to one who has lived in the Soviet Union and studied the economic, political, and social structure of that country, it is not surprising that these repatriated citizens should hold the views with which the article credits them.

The Moscow *Bolshevik*, on 4 July 1945, under the title of "A Most Important Task of Bolshevik Propagandists and Agitators" came into the "explanation of Soviet victory" arena by stating that an "important and immediate task of propagandists and agitators is to explain fully the causes of the Soviet Union's victory". The article stressed the importance of mastering Marxism-Leninism and warned against attempts to introduce what it terms "hostile bourgeois ideology", which is a fabrication of various pro-fascists and bourgeois reactionaries endeavouring to show that it was the Russian expanses and climate which caused the Soviet people to win the war. This reference to "hostile bourgeois ideology" might have been taken for a reference to some outside influence were it not for the fact that the article advises Bolshevik propagandists and agitators that the best means of countering this hostile propaganda is by the use of such books as the *Short History of the Communist Party* and Stalin's book *The Great Patriotic War*. The article clearly shows any student of Russian Communism that the war has brought in its wake great enlightenment among at least some sections of the community, despite the strict censorship exercised by the authorities.

### *Influence of the German Occupation*

From the time I arrived in Moscow (December 1943) until I left there (February 1946) the Press never ceased telling its readers of the sufferings of Soviet citizens in German-occupied parts of the Soviet Union. Special books were published giving graphic descriptions of hangings and all sorts of other horrors. Films were made depicting the cruelty of the occupation troops. Every possible form of propaganda was used to bring home forcibly to the people of the U.S.S.R. evidences of German brutality.

While much of this propaganda was part of a general "hate campaign" waged by the authorities, undoubtedly there was great suffering throughout the German occupation. But it was strange to find that after the liberation of those territories the people, like their fellows from the German labour camps, had had their minds poisoned against the Soviet Government by German lies. An article appearing in *Bolshevik*, No. 14 of 1945, confirms this:

The Party organizations must carry out an enormous ideological work in the districts liberated from German occupation, where the population has been poisoned by Fascist propaganda and where the enemy used every means to undermine the confidence of the masses in the justice of our cause. It is the first and most important duty of the Party organizations

to eradicate completely all traces of enemy propaganda and to engage the workers, peasants, and intelligentsia on these districts in active Socialist construction.

If the standard of living and culture in the Soviet Union were even half as high as pro-Soviet propagandists abroad would have people believe, it would not have been possible for the Germans to undermine the Soviet citizens' faith in their own country, particularly during the German occupation. It is interesting to note in the article quoted above, that those who had their minds "poisoned" included not only the Soviet peasantry, but the workers and intelligentsia of liberated areas.

### *German "High Culture"*

That the contact of Soviet citizens with the people of other parts of Europe is being given high priority in Communist Party work is evident from the fact that no less a person than Kalinin, the then President of the U.S.S.R., called together on 22 August 1945 a group of Communist Party secretaries of rural rayon Party Committees and addressed them on the Party's work ahead. In his address Kalinin said:\*

The Party functionaries must devote more attention to raising the cultural standard of the population, in helping them to analyse the political and world situation, so that the people are well informed and stand on guard over the country's interests.

We need a culture which will help to carry out the work not just mechanically, not merely by habit, but conscientiously. Reference has been made here to the men who are now returning from Germany and have seen the "high culture" of German villages which has left a certain impression on them. Our agitators must repudiate the German "high culture". It seems to me that the following analogy may be drawn in this matter:

There are people to be found—both in towns and villages—who hardly ever read and are, in actual fact of little intelligence, but try to dress themselves according to the latest fashion, wear hats, even dinner jackets, use perfume and try to give the appearance of being "educated" men, whilst in actual fact they are lacking in any inner culture.

Here is another example of Red Army disillusionment about the high standard of living and culture in the U.S.S.R. With all due respect to the "analogy" given to break down this impression of the "high culture" found in German villages, I am sure the Red Army men and other ordinary Soviet citizens, would better appreciate some more food, better housing and greater freedom within their own country.

*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the paper of the Young Communist League, carried in its issue of September 1945 a lengthy article under the heading of "They have Returned to their Fatherland",

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\* *Party Administration and Organization*, No. 16 of August 1944.

dealing with the return to the Ukrainian districts from German territory of Soviet citizens between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-three years.

The article advised the Komsomols of those districts to record these returned people's accounts of their humiliations, beatings, and hard labour, and at the same time to inform them of what happened in the Soviet Union during their absence. The article then went on to say that the returned people for some reason think that people at home wish to avoid them. Pointing out that such was not the case, the article said:

It was noted that some of the girls when they go to work put on all sorts of trinkets, cheap bracelets, arrange their hair in a peculiar way; they have been to Germany for such a long time that they have assumed some of the external aspects of the famous German "culture". Propagandists explain to them the showy nature of German culture and the true essence of Soviet culture.

It seems strange that these young women are held up to ridicule merely because they attempt to satisfy a normal desire to have such things as bracelets, or to take a pride in their hair. Why should they be singled out for particular attention by political propagandists in order to demonstrate the difference between the "showy nature of German culture and the true essence of Soviet culture"? Surely young people who have had Soviet culture pumped into them from their cradle days until they were taken to Germany in the Labour Corps do not need the help of propagandists to understand the difference between what they experienced in German prison camps and the culture of their own country.

The plain but hard fact is that the many thousands of Soviet citizens found in different parts of Europe at the end of the war have been fighting hard against being sent back to their own country. Many of them prefer suicide. This does not commend the standards of living and culture of the ordinary Soviet citizen or the treatment meted out to him by the Soviet authorities on his return to Russia.

### *A Welcome Home*

Those who followed events closely after the Allied landing in France will recall that large numbers of former Soviet citizens, all of whom had been fighting on the side of Germany, were captured by the Allies. It will also be remembered that the Soviet protested publicly against the alleged ill-treatment of these citizens by American and British Army Commands and insisted on their immediate repatriation. While the Soviet Government was making loud protests against their alleged ill-treatment, the Moscow Press commenced to weep for these people who had been forced against their will to fight on the side of the Germans. The Press assured



them of a right royal welcome, as befits heroes of the Soviet Union. Had the Soviet authorities not carried out this stupid propaganda campaign to convince the Russian people that no Soviet citizen would willingly leave his own country to fight for the enemy, and just treated these men as traitors and dealt with them as such, there would not be room for comment.

With the news that these men were coming back to the U.S.S.R., the authorities decided that whatever their sins of omission or commission they were to be forgotten and forgiven.

The first batch of returned prisoners received a welcome fit for heroes of the U.S.S.R. A band played on the wharf, long speeches were delivered, and flowers were handed to each hero as he landed.

The welcome was given a lengthy write up in the Moscow Press, which, however, omitted to describe the end of the ceremony.

At the conclusion of the wharf pantomime the returned men were marched through the gates, where a detachment of N.K.V.D. men armed with tommy-guns took up positions at intervals on either side of the marching men and accompanied them on the final stage of their journey. This was not to their homes. Today those men are either dead or are paying a heavy price in N.K.V.D. prison camps for their misdemeanors against the Soviet Union.

### *Sailor Take Care*

Another illustration of the fear that Soviet citizens may become contaminated with anti-Soviet ideas through contact with peoples of other countries is to be found in the precautions taken to prevent Soviet seamen from learning much about the countries they visit or from discussing conditions in the U.S.S.R.

Before leaving port all Soviet seamen on ships bound for foreign countries are given a list of instructions to be strictly observed in their absence from Russia. The instructions provide that a seaman is not to read any foreign publications or papers in the Russian language published abroad; he is not to become acquainted with any Russian emigrant or refugee, or to have any intercourse whatsoever, with such emigrant or refugee; he is not to speak to or have anything to do with foreigners in foreign ports; he must not frequent hotels or taverns or drink in any such places; he must not have anything to do with women; he is not to attend theatres or movies except those listed by the local Soviet representative and approved by the Political Commissar aboard ship. On departure from the last Soviet port of call, all documents and means of identification, such as Trade Union card, labour book, photograph, or any other document that might be of service for identification are to be surrendered to the Political Commissar on board. Any seaman who is discovered on board with any such documents in his possession will be immediately considered guilty of sabotage and treated as

an agent of the country to which the vessel is bound at the time. Infringement of any of the foregoing instructions will be regarded as treasonable, as also will any disobedience to orders issued by the Political Commissar on board or by the local Soviet representative in the port of call. Last but not least of these instructions is that which prohibits any seaman making known in whole or in part any of the above instructions in any foreign port. Since this information was not given to me in any foreign port, I presume my informant would not be liable under this last provision.

One would think that these instructions would be sufficient to serve all purposes, but apparently Soviet officialdom has other ideas and does not leave much to the discretion of the senior officers on board ship. In addition to these personal instructions to seamen, the following rules are also to be observed: On arrival at any foreign port, shore leave can be granted only by the captain and Political Commissar conjointly; shore leave must not be granted to more than one-third of the ship's crew at the one time; seamen going ashore must do so in groups of not less than three, one of whom must be a Party member or an officer; all shore leave expires not later than 10 p.m. on ordinary days and 7 p.m. on Saturdays. On Sundays no leave may be granted.

Before going ashore on leave a seaman must first sign a book in the office of the Political Commissar. He must sign the book again on returning from leave. Any person returning to his ship later than the hour set down for his return will be liable to arrest and confinement for five to ten days on a prisoner's ration of a jug of water and three-quarters of a loaf of bread a day.

Officers who are granted shore leave may go ashore in groups of two or more. No member of the crew is permitted to make any purchases ashore other than in stores approved by the local Soviet representative and Political Commissar and listed as approved stores from which purchases may be made by seamen.

Fantastic as these instructions and rules may seem, they are in keeping with many other happenings inside the U.S.S.R. which are carried out in the name of a "Socialist democracy". The precautions taken to ensure that Soviet citizens have as little contact as possible with peoples of foreign countries lend colour to the theory that Stalin made two major mistakes during the war—he showed the Red Army to Europe, and he showed Europe to the Red Army.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LAW AND THE SECRET POLICE

#### *The Law Courts*

MACHINERY for the administration of law in the U.S.S.R., while making pleasant reading in Soviet publications, does not operate quite so well as one is led to believe, nor is justice always dispensed through public Courts.

The Courts generally are divided into three jurisdictions: "The People's Court", the "Civil Court", and the "Criminal Court". In both Civil and Criminal Courts the bench consists of a President and two judges, all of whom are full-time officials who are required to have at least three years' legal training before appointment.

These officials are appointed by the Soviet of the districts within which the Courts function. In the case of the Moscow district it is the Moscow Soviet that makes the appointments. Office on both Civil and Criminal Court benches is for five years, at a salary of 1500 roubles per month, plus a special food ration allowance.

In the People's Court, a President is appointed in the same manner as are the judges of the other two Courts, but his term is for three years. Two others sit on the bench with him and are selected from factory workers of the district in which the Court operates. Their term of office is limited to not more than ten weeks in any one year, after which they must return to their places of employment. Other workers will then be selected to take their places on the bench. While acting on the People's Court bench these workers' representatives receive the same salary as they received in the factory immediately prior to their selection for the Court bench.

Over and above the constituted personnel of these Courts there is a President of the Courts, also appointed by the District Soviet. All decisions in any of the three Courts must be majority decisions, provided that the President of the Courts happens to be one of the majority. Should there be a majority opinion in which the President is the minority, then a decision cannot be recorded. The whole matter is submitted to the President of the Courts for examination and determination, and his decision is final.

Counsel for the prosecution and advocates for the defence are State employees. They, too, are required to have three years' legal training before entering the Courts. Defence advocates are allotted



to accused persons by the State; but it is possible for an accused, if he so desires, to select any particular man from this State panel to represent him.

Appeals from a decision of the People's Court may be heard and determined by the Civil Court. The jurisdiction of both People's and Civil Courts covers what may be regarded as minor matters, such as disputes between citizens over ownership, housing laws, civil assault cases and the like, with the Civil Court exercising jurisdiction over everyday Soviet laws.

### *Criminal Offences*

The jurisdiction of the Criminal Court is rather elastic, resting mainly on what the authorities regard as coming within the ambit of the country's criminal laws. These laws are, in themselves, elastically worded, so that almost any action can be made to be of criminal character if the responsible authorities deem it advisable.

For example, a worker who abuses his foreman may be brought before the Criminal Court and charged under that section of the Code which forbids any action that challenges the authority of the State or its officers, even though the abuse may have no political significance from the worker's point of view. One such case, I know, resulted in the person concerned going to prison for four years. Lateness for work or absenteeism may also be treated as criminal and brought before the Criminal Court, but with such cases it mainly depends on the circumstances at the time. For instance, when the authorities were endeavouring to stamp out the practice of arriving late for work or absenteeism or absconding from work almost every offence of this character was treated as a criminal offence. I learned of a worker who was charged at the Criminal Court with frequently arriving late at his place of employment, and who was sentenced to be shot for his offence. Many other workers guilty of such offences are now in prison labour camps serving sentences of varying periods up to ten years.

In a wider sphere the Criminal Code laws of the R.S.F.S.R. are applied to major political cases for which the Soviet authorities seek to gain publicity, either for home or foreign consumption—such as the political trials between 1936 and 1938; the trials of the sixteen leaders of the Polish Underground Movement in Moscow during 1945; and the recent trials of German prisoners of war conducted at different points throughout the U.S.S.R. All these cases were heard and the accused were charged with offences against the Soviet Union as set out in the Criminal Code of the R.S.F.S.R. This particular Code, on face value, applies only to the R.S.F.S.R., but on instructions from Moscow each constituent Republic has embodied that Code in its laws, giving it an All-Union application.

*A Reasonable Trial*

In the presentation of a case in the Soviet Courts a rather interesting method—if somewhat prejudicial to the accused person—is adopted. A large amount of written evidence against the accused is correlated and presented in volume fashion to the Court by the counsel for the prosecution. This evidence is first obtained in writing by officers, or agents, of the prosecution from people who claim to know something about the accused and the charges against him, and who are prepared to sign their names to statements expressing their particular version, opinion, idea, or experience and knowledge of the accused's guilt. At best this evidence could be regarded as one-sided and the form in which it can be given is in no way limited. The person making the statement may be embroidering what a third person has said, or the evidence may be purely circumstantial or guesswork on the part of the person making the statement; but it all goes into the volume of evidence which is read to the Court by the prosecuting counsel. Persons making statements presented in this fashion are not required to attend the Court, to substantiate their evidence, or to submit to cross-examination. The mere fact that they have made and signed statements appears to be sufficient proof for the Soviet Courts of their truthfulness. One can imagine what might happen under this system in a political trial conducted by a zealous prosecutor and presided over by equally zealous judges of the political faith attacked.

All testimony, however, is not submitted in the form described above. Some witnesses are called before the Courts to give verbal evidence, generally in cases of no great political importance. Witnesses coming before the Court to give oral evidence are not sworn and are allowed considerable freedom in the presentation of their evidence, as also are the accused. While in the Court, such witnesses are subject to examination and cross examination by all parties to the proceedings. Advocates for the defence—in political trials especially—make pleas of extenuating circumstances on behalf of their clients and ask for leniency rather than attempt to prove their clients' innocence. In a country where the State cannot err it would be rather too much to expect State defence advocates to do otherwise.

Generally speaking—apart from political cases, and apart from some abuses due to the method of presenting evidence—a reasonable trial appears to be given to an accused person appearing before the lower Courts. Common laws also appear to be administered fairly. But I would not care to be an innocent person charged under the Soviet Criminal Code.

*The N.K.V.D.*

The most powerful of all Soviet instruments for the preservation of law and order and the administration of justice is the Department of Internal Security, commonly known as the N.K.V.D. This organization was known prior to July 1934 as the O.G.P.U. It had become as well known by repute in outside countries as the Gestapo, and is today undoubtedly the most powerful and ruthless body in the Soviet Union. Without its support the present regime would find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to retain control over such a large, mixed union of peoples. The ramifications of the N.K.V.D. cover the whole militia force (police), ranging from the ordinary militia man and woman directing traffic and attending to the ordinary preservation of law and order up to, and including the highly developed secret police force and its agents throughout the U.S.S.R.

Unless the Government desires to "cash in" on the publicity value of political trials, persons arrested by the N.K.V.D. for political offences—as interpreted by the N.K.V.D.—do not come before the public Courts but are dealt with direct by the N.K.V.D. and given such prison sentences as officers of that body decree. Such people are sent to the many prison labour camps scattered throughout the U.S.S.R. and controlled directly by the N.K.V.D.

*Control Through Fear*

There is one difficulty in writing of the machinations of this secret police organization, and that is the knowledge that if one quoted specific cases of Soviet citizens being taken from their beds in the early hours of the morning by the N.K.V.D. to disappear, sometimes for ever, from the knowledge of their friends or relatives, one would be committing the families and friends of those people to a like fate. Under the Soviet interpretation of justice there would be no hesitation in casting into prison any, and every, Soviet citizen suspected of having given such information.

This principle of making relatives suffer is held over the heads of every Soviet citizen fortunate enough to obtain an exit *visa*. In case such a citizen, while abroad, should speak of conditions in the U.S.S.R. other than officially, the Soviet authorities will, whenever possible, detain a relative to whom an exit *visa* has already been granted, or allow a mother an exit *visa* and refuse one for her child or children. In no other country is the value of hostages so deeply appreciated as in the U.S.S.R.

An offence for which many are placed in prison labour camps by the N.K.V.D. is that of having associated with foreigners within the U.S.S.R. Unless the persons associating with foreigners are acting as agents for the N.K.V.D., the association involves a serious



political offence. While I was in the U.S.S.R. dozens of cases came to my notice of Soviet citizens being arrested by the N.K.V.D. and cast into prison camps for speaking to or taking an interest in foreigners.

Arrests by N.K.V.D. men are made in the early hours of the morning. On entering the wanted person's room, the police order him or her to dress and accompany them; they refuse to leave the room for one minute, even to allow their prisoner to dress. No explanation is given to the person arrested or to any relatives who may be sharing the room, nor is any member of the family permitted to accompany the prisoner to the N.K.V.D. headquarters or the prison to which he is taken pending trial.

Relatives or friends of an arrested person cannot at any time ascertain from the N.K.V.D. authorities what the charge is, where the prisoner has been sent, or what sentence has been imposed. The only way of discovering if the arrested person is still in the headquarters prison is to take food for him to the prison officials. The food will be accepted if the prisoner has not been sent away. If he has been sent to a prison camp the officials refuse to take the food. This is the only possible means of finding out whether an arrested person has been sent away, and even after this fact has been established it is not possible to obtain any particulars of the transfer from the N.K.V.D.

If a person confined to a prison labour camp has not received from the N.K.V.D. a sentence depriving him of all liberties, he may be able to write home and let his relatives know some details of his arrest. If, however, his sentence includes the deprivation of all liberties, then the only chance the relatives have of hearing about him, and it is a slender chance, is through some prisoner who has been released from the same camp. This, however, is a dangerous practice. On release, all prisoners are warned against discussing the prison camps and their inhabitants. Some sentences allow prisoners to write as many letters as they wish and they may receive unlimited mail, but this privilege is rarely, if ever, granted to political prisoners.

Political offences cover a very wide range of charges and most of the offences would be regarded by people of democratic countries as their everyday rights. In the U.S.S.R. such things as criticizing the Government, openly complaining about its failure to provide more or better food, complaining of standing in queues for hours, giving other citizens information gained about other countries, which reveals better conditions than in the U.S.S.R. become criminal matters to be dealt with by the N.K.V.D.

It does not necessarily follow that a person sentenced by the N.K.V.D. to a prison term will be released at the expiration of that term. Once a prisoner is in the hands of the N.K.V.D. it

rests entirely with them whether he is released or not at the end of the original sentence. Many cases have come to my knowledge where the original prison term elapsed years ago and the persons concerned are still in labour camps with no knowledge of when, if ever, they will be released. Many of the cases that I have learned of tell of a husband, or sometimes a wife, taken from bed during a nocturnal visit of the N.K.V.D. years before and not heard of since. They may even be dead.

So thorough is this secret police organization, and so feared by the ordinary Soviet citizen, that it is impossible to get any two Soviet citizens outside family circles to discuss the N.K.V.D. Any Soviet citizen who does so with a foreigner first takes every precaution against being overheard and then speaks only in the lowest of whispers, avoiding as far as possible the mention even of the initials of this body. There must be very few people within the U.S.S.R. who can say with any degree of confidence that among his fellow workmates there is not an agent or member of the N.K.V.D.

### *Prison Labour Camps*

Prison labour camps are scattered in thousands throughout the U.S.S.R. The inmates are offenders against various Soviet laws, including political prisoners. Many former citizens of the Baltic States and Poland are classed among the political offenders, particularly those from parts of Poland regarded as Soviet territory since the readjustment of boundaries agreement between the Soviet and the present regime of Poland.

Various writers have from time to time given estimates of the number of people in these prison labour camps, but in the absence of reliable statistics from the Soviet authorities, at best only a rough estimate could be made. It can quite safely be said, however, that the numbers in these camps amount to millions.

I obtained figures from reliable sources within the U.S.S.R. which reveal the existence in one district alone of camps containing at least 50,000 prisoners. One camp in particular contains 1000 political prisoners, consisting of men and women between the ages of 16 and 70, the majority being between the ages of 20 and 30.

The practice followed by the N.K.V.D. with prisoners under their control is to keep them on the move. They are shifted about from camp to camp at intervals of approximately six months. The internal work of the camps is conducted mainly by prison labour. Brigadiers (foremen) are selected from the prisoners, and their duty is to see that the captives under their command perform the allotted amount of work each day. They must organize the labour to produce the required work.

Rather extraordinary powers are given to these brigadiers. They

can sentence a fellow prisoner under their command to a period of solitary confinement, or they may have his food ration cut down for any breach of discipline. The food ration allowed prisoners is very low but they can increase it themselves by doing more work than is required to obtain the basic food allowance.

Prison camp hospitals are staffed completely by prison labour, as are practically all administrative offices. From this fact some idea can be gained of the wide range of professions found in these camps.

Prisoners are paid in cash for work performed, but the earnings of any prisoner are limited to 50 roubles per month. This has to be used in payment for food rations. Hours of labour are between ten and eleven hours daily. The inmates work a continuous nine-day period and have every tenth day for rest. The schedule of working days is made up with the tenth, twentieth, and thirtieth day of each month a day of rest, the last day of February being the third day of rest for that particular month. In addition to disciplinary measures vested in the prisoner brigadier, there is an additional sentence of two years awaiting persons who engage in fights with fellow prisoners. The penalty for any prisoner caught while attempting to escape is ten years added to his sentence.

In addition to these ordinary prison labour camps, which have been part of everyday affairs in the U.S.S.R. since the war, there have grown up prisoner of war labour camps. In these, many hundreds of thousands of German and Japanese prisoners of war are confined. Unlike prisoners of war from or in other countries, these German and Japanese prisoners have only the remotest chance of leaving the Soviet Union labour camps. No person outside the high Soviet administration knows just how many prisoners of war are in the Soviet Union and where they are all located. It is a common sight to see large gangs of German prisoners of war at work on various projects in and around Moscow. During the summer of 1944 I saw one tightly packed trainload of German prisoners *en route* to Siberia, where they undoubtedly still are.

### *Behind the Red Army*

A section of the N.K.V.D. took charge of liberated or occupied areas during the war. As the Red Army moved on the N.K.V.D. came in to do the political cleaning-up and to organize the administration necessary to restore law and order according to Soviet standards.

When the Ukraine was liberated some divisions of the N.K.V.D. moved in after the army and transported from the Ukraine to other parts of the U.S.S.R. most of the male population between the ages of 16 and 60. This removal was possibly due to the fact that, in the final stages of the fighting for the liberation of the Ukraine,



Ukrainian nationals in German uniforms fought in the battles against the Red Army.

In the Baltic States also the N.K.V.D. removed to remote parts of the U.S.S.R. many male inhabitants of those formerly independent States. In one town alone in Estonia no less than 23,000 males were arrested by the N.K.V.D. and transported to the U.S.S.R. immediately after the town's liberation. In those parts of Poland now regarded by Russia as Soviet territory many thousands of the inhabitants were arrested by the N.K.V.D. and sent to Russia.

*Military Titles of N.K.V.D. Officials*

A recent development of major significance has been to award military honours to high ranking N.K.V.D. personnel. These honours include the Order of Kutuzov, 1st and 2nd class, and the Order of the Patriotic War.\*

The bestowal of these military decorations was followed by a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet published in all Moscow papers on 10 July 1945 instituting for high ranking personnel of the N.K.V.D. the same uniform and insignia of rank of commanding personnel as operates for officers of the Red Army and Red Fleet. Under this decree those members of the N.K.V.D. who formerly bore the title of Commissar of State Security were now called "General" and so on, according to the rank or standing of the person concerned.

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\* *Izvestiya*, 25 February 1945 and 11 April 1945.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SOVIET AND THE CHURCH

#### *Anti-God Museums*

FROM the date of the seizure of power in Russia by the Communist Party, a vigorous, and at times ruthless, campaign against religion and those associated with it was commenced. All church property was confiscated by the State. Priests and nuns were expelled from their monasteries and convents and thousands were cast into the prison labour camps that had become part of the "New Order" for the Russian masses.

Many leading churches and monasteries were converted into anti-God or anti-religious museums. Others were used by anti-religious organizations for political purposes. Thousands of beautiful buildings were converted to living quarters, storehouses, and workshops. Today most of these churches and monasteries are unsightly and neglected. In 1921 the Communist Party, to obtain foreign exchange, stripped many Russian churches of all valuables for shipment abroad. Even the cupolas and other parts of the buildings were torn down.\*

Until 1944 Saint Isaac's Cathedral in Leningrad was used as an anti-religious museum while Karzan Cathedral in the same city had become an anti-God museum. With its changing attitude towards religion the State in 1944 abolished these anti-religious museums but did not restore the two cathedrals as places of worship. With the eulogy of former Russian Military men that sprang up during the war years, the fact that General Kutuzov, who died in 1812, was buried in Karzan Cathedral led to the Cathedral's being hurriedly converted from an anti-God museum to a place of worship of the military deeds of the departed Tsarist General. To it came workers and intellectuals to pay tribute to the tomb of the departed General and to study his writings in the many show-cases scattered about the building.

#### *The Union of Militant Atheists*

Arising from the anti-religious campaigns conducted since the end

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\* P. Fedoseev, L. V., *Stalin on Religion and the Struggle Against It*. Moscow 1939.

of 1917, what is now known as "The Union of Militant Atheists" was given official birth. It has apparently been sleeping peacefully since early in 1943; but according to its published "Aims and Tasks" its first objective was to "unite the broad masses of the toilers of the U.S.S.R. for active, systematic and thorough struggle against religion in all shapes and forms". In order to carry out this objective the Union "carries on and supports anti-religious propaganda through the press, through lectures, circles, museums, courses, anti-religious universities, schools, cinemas, theatrical performances, excursions, etc." The Union claims that:

The successful fight against religion is possible only by the formation of a united front of all public organizations against its front. In order to organize this united front the U.M.A. joins with the C.P.S.U. (Bolshevik), Y.C.L.S.U., Trade Unions, voluntary societies, etc., and strives to implant the elements of anti-religious propaganda and agitation in all forms of political education and cultural work.

What is most significant is one of the provisions of membership of this Union which admits to its ranks "toiling citizens of the U.S.S.R. living abroad, who have reached the age of fourteen, broken with religion and pay the membership fee and international dues".

This organization built its cells in factories, plants, institutions, military units, clubs, State and collective farms, and educational institutions, while in the schools groups of young atheists were formed, with members not younger than eight years of age, to co-operate in the work of local cells and organizations of the U.M.A.

To assist the body in its work, "There is a department connected with the Communist Academy of the U.S.S.R., especially for training highly qualified anti-religious workers." Further,

A new form of training active anti-religious workers must be noted, the so-called workers and collective farm anti-religious universities. These universities, which are to be found in most all regional and in many district centres, set themselves the task of giving a thorough theoretical training to the lower sections of the atheist workers, without isolating them from the day-by-day practical work. The course of the workers' universities is usually calculated for two years.

The task of stamping out religion in the U.S.S.R. was not confined to the Union of Militant Atheists alone, for one finds that "anti-religious work is one of the obligations incumbent upon all organizations of the Party, of political, educational, of trade unions, of co-operatives, of the Young Communists . . . of all Soviet public opinion". The last Party Congress, the Sixteenth, declared in its resolution of Comrade Stalin's report that:

The Party must reinforce and develop further the important successes which have been gained in the cause of emancipating the masses from the



reactionary influence of religion . . . . Every under-estimation of the political significance of the anti-religious propaganda, every renunciation of the struggle against religion, is a form of compromise with the class enemy, an unmistakable expression of rightwing opportunism.

Each of the foregoing quotations has been made from the pamphlet *Union of Militant Atheists and Its Work*.<sup>\*</sup> This organization at the time of publication claimed a membership of five million, so it will be seen that the extent of anti-religious work within the U.S.S.R. was not insignificant.

### *The Drop in the Clergy*

That was of course in 1932 and we can leave the Union of Militant Atheists and its work and come to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., held in Moscow in March 1939. Here we find the present Minister for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., V. Molotov, submitting his report to that Congress and bringing into it a reference to religion. Molotov was demonstrating to his audience great advancements made under the Soviet regime and quoting figures showing the position in 1913—a favourite basis for Soviet statistics—as against the position in 1937. Here are his own words relative to the Kursk Province:

There were 274 physicians; now there are 941. There were 636 persons belonging to the intermediate medical personnel—*feldshers* and midwives; now there are 2375. There were 70 agronomists; now there are 2279. On the other hand, there were 3189 members of the clergy; now there are 859. Here this is a big drop (*general laughter*).<sup>†</sup>

### *Religion Not a Private Affair*

A little later one finds in a publication by E. Yaroslavsky, entitled *Communism and Religion*<sup>‡</sup> and intended for anti-religious propaganda in the Baltic States, that the Party attitude towards religion is as hostile as ever. Under the heading of "The Party Claims the Struggle Against Religion", Yaroslavsky says:

As regards the Party of the Socialist proletariat—wrote Lenin—religion is not a private affair. Our party is the union of conscious forward champions for the liberation of the working class. Such a union cannot and must not be indifferent to the unconsciousness, darkness and obscurantism like the religious creeds. A member of the Party cannot say "a struggle against religion is not my business". To those who thought that our Party can dispense of the anti-religious propaganda, Lenin answers: "All our programme is based on scientific and more so on a materialistic conception of the world. The explanation of our programme includes also the necessity of explanation of the historical and economical roots of religious

<sup>\*</sup> Moscow, 1932.

<sup>†</sup> V. Molotov, *The Third Five Year Plan for the National Economic Development of the U.S.S.R.*

<sup>‡</sup> Moscow, 1941.

mist. Our programme necessarily includes also the propaganda of atheism."

Lenin warns and cautions against the false view that it is possible to destroy religion by anti-religious propaganda only. The roots of religion are in the economic, social enslavement of the masses. Lenin proposes to protrude the question of religion to the first place.

Under the heading of "The Reactionary Role of the Church in the U.S.S.R." Yaroslavsky has this to say:

The class enemy, crushed within the country, is not yet finally annihilated. One of its refuges are the religious organizations spreading reactionary hostile ideas. Thrown from their nests, the monks and nuns, thousands of clergymen of different religions, who only recently held the banner of revolt against the Soviet power, have not yet come to the notion that their game is definitely lost.

Had Yaroslavsky completed his reference to monks and nuns being thrown from their nests he would have told of their taking up new places of abode in prison labour camps where many remain to this day. Strange to say, one never finds reference to these prison labour camps in any Soviet writings or publications.

Under the heading of "The Programme of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) as Regards Religion and the Struggle against It", Yaroslavsky says:

Taking into consideration that religion is not a private affair for the Party, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union included in its programme a special paragraph dealing with the attitude of the Communist Party towards religion. In this paragraph (the 13th) it is said: "As regards religion, the All-Union Communist Party is not content with the decreed separation of the Church from the State and of the school from the Church, viz. measures which the bourgeois democracy exhibits in their programmes but which were nowhere carried through to the end on account of many actual connexions of the capital with religious propaganda. The Communist Party is guided by the conviction that only the accomplishment of the systematic and conscious social and economic activity of the masses will entail the complete dying out of religious prejudices. The Party tends to completely destroy the bond between the exploiting classes and the organization of religious propaganda aiding the toiling masses to get liberated from religious prejudices and organizing a most wide scientific and instructive anti-religious propaganda."

Dealing with the Stalin Constitution and the liberty of anti-religious propaganda, Yaroslavsky says:

We have a great number of believers in our country. There are also many believers, organizations with their professional priests—the ministers of worship. The anti-religious propaganda is therefore necessary. Those who cease thinking of the necessity of anti-religious propaganda, prepare the ground for the activity of religious organizations and of their ministers.

Church men and sectarian leaders will always try to sneak into the Soviets of the toilers or have their protégés passed in. All these attempts we must oppose by anti-religious agitation and propaganda. We must not forget the wise direction of Comrade Stalin. If the population in some parts will elect hostile men, that will mean that our agitation work is badly carried out and that we have well earned this infamy. But, if our agitation work is conducted, as is due to Bolsheviks, then the population will not let pass hostile men to the supreme organs.

Under the heading of "About the Problems of Communistic Education of the Toilers and about the Struggle with Religion", Yaroslavsky says:

Can we be content with that which has been already accomplished? Dying of religious ideology, it will then end when all the toilers will break off with religion. We must help them in that. That is the aim of our propaganda, of our agitation. The religious men, left, are now as a rule, the most backward strata of population. That means that in the anti-religious struggle, the instructions repeatedly given by the Party, Lenin and Stalin, should be carefully followed; the anti-religious propaganda must be conducted skilfully, tactfully, always considering the level of development, the level of consciousness of the believers. We must have in view the problem of development in the broad masses of the toilers the scientific Lenin-Stalin conception of the world. Every influence of religion in the rising generation must be paralysed. The struggle for youth, for the children, must be one of the aims not only of the Union of Militant Atheists but primarily of the Komsomol and the Soviet schools.

As late as 1941, then, Yaroslavsky, speaking on behalf of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., makes its attitude quite clear on religion. Religion was regarded as something at all times to be fought. Yaroslavsky claims that religious men are now the most backward of the population and if any of them should be elected to a supreme authority in the U.S.S.R. it will be due to a weakness in the Party's agitational work.

### *The Road Back*

What happened between 1941 and the end of 1942 to change the official attitude towards religion? If one were to ask some of the pro-Soviet propagandists this question they would of course affirm that religion has always been free in the U.S.S.R. But the explanation of this change of attitude goes deeper than this.

Despite anti-religious propaganda and persecution of the clergy in the U.S.S.R., religion has always been deeply embedded in the hearts of ordinary Soviet citizens. Stalin was to learn this to his chagrin shortly after the German attack on Russia. German intelligence agents in the U.S.S.R. had been wise enough to evaluate the religious feelings of the populace and with the invasion of Russia by the German Army came ministers of religion, who re-established the Church in the districts of the Ukraine. The local populace responded in an unexpected manner, showing that despite the anti-religious work of the Party, the Soviet citizen was still religious at heart. There is no doubt that the new attitude of toleration towards religion had as one of its aims the regaining of respect from religious people and organizations of other countries whose hostility towards the Soviet regime was chiefly caused by the Soviet attitude to religion.



*Harnessed to the State*

To think of the Russian Orthodox Church as a body separate from and independent of the State would be a great mistake. With the revival of religion in the U.S.S.R. Stalin has managed to harness the Church to his State organization, but not for the sole purpose of administering to the religious needs of the Soviet people.

By State recognition of the Church, Stalin and his Party controllers are able to use it very effectively for their own purposes. Firstly by giving the Russian Orthodox Church a place in the community without fear of persecution—immediate persecution at any rate—the religious desires are satisfied of many citizens whose concealed hostility towards the regime was based on the attitude of the State towards religion rather than on economic or political grounds. Thousands of people who might otherwise have become easy prey for a counter-revolution springing up from the war, could then be relied on in such a situation to follow the lead given them by the Church. Provided the State exercised control over the Church the lead given by the Church could be assured to the Party.

Secondly, Stalin realized the value of the Russian Orthodox Church, correctly led and controlled, in spreading pro-Soviet propaganda in those eastern and near-eastern countries where the Orthodox Church was established. In this regard he was thinking more of the "backward" countries where the influence of the Orthodox Church on the populace was the only cultural approach to the masses, than of democratic countries where cultural organizations and Trade Unions operated. The restoration of the Russian Orthodox Church so that it could take the lead over orthodox religious bodies of other countries was important, hence the sudden desire of the Soviet to give full publicity to the revival of religion within the U.S.S.R. To this end the Archbishop of York's visit to Moscow in 1943 and his conducting of a service in the Russian Church was all part of a carefully arranged plan of propaganda by the Party.

In September 1943, to give effect to his plan to use the Russian Orthodox Church for his own ends, Stalin received in the Kremlin the Metropolitan priests Sergei, Alexei, and Nikolai. From this meeting came the recognition of the Church and the approval by Stalin of the first step towards its revival. Not only was the Church re-established at this meeting but a special State Commissariat was set up to look after it and permission was given to publish a Church paper entitled *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, the first issue of which was published in January 1944.

Metropolitan Nikolai in a sermon in the Voskresenskaya Church of Moscow on 9 January 1944 said the believers of Moscow, together with the whole of the Russian Orthodox Church, were celebrating

Christmas this year with much joy. He referred to the fact that four months previously the Russian Church was reinstated to its hierarchical rank. He said, "After a nineteen year interval, the believers of Moscow are again glorifying the Lord with their Holy Patriarch."\*

The position of the Church in relation to the State was made fairly clear shortly after the Kremlin meeting when, during the celebrations of the Twenty-Sixth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution, Metropolitan Nikolai "addressed" a fervent appeal to all parishes of Moscow to mark the day by donations "to meet the needs of the fatherland". Here was a Church leader asking his parishioners to celebrate the date of the beginning of the religious persecution that had been carried on throughout the whole period of the regime's existence until a short time before the appeal was made.

### *"Appointed by God"*

In the issue of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* carrying the report of the appeal (no. 1, January 1944), a long article by Metropolitan Nikolai appeared under the heading "The Supreme Leader of the Country and the Red Army". The article began with a reference to the national heroes of the past, including Field-Marshal Kutuzov and General Suvorov, two Tsarist military leaders whose fame was at that time being honoured by the Soviet State, special military awards being named after them. If this reference was merely a coincidence there was no mistake about where the Metropolitan's loyalty lay, for in the same article he said:

In the present patriotic war the Russian people, with their heroic army, never lost or will lose their firm faith in ultimate victory, since their army is led by Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, the beloved leader of the people and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the army, appointed by God to serve the fatherland in this time of ordeal.

The discovery that Stalin, probably the world's leading materialist, was "appointed by God" must have come as a great shock to the five million members of the Union of Militant Atheists.

This eulogy of Stalin spread among Church leaders in the U.S.S.R. and similar statements, which were given prominence in Moscow papers, were made by various other Russian Church leaders.

That Stalin had not miscalculated in his sudden reversal of religious policy is borne out by a message addressed by the Metropolitans of Leningrad and Novgorod during Easter 1944 to the clergy and their flocks in liberated localities. The message said:†

\* *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, no. 1, January 1944.

† *Ibid.* no. 4, April 1944.

By carrying out the orders of the civil authorities show yourself worthy of the great dignity of being a citizen of your fatherland and an Orthodox Christian.

Our Government, the Soviet Government, is the bulwark of your welfare, your development and your security in old age. Give it your love, protect it, help it in the great cause of restoring our memorials, dwellings, and sacred objects.

The first Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, convened in Moscow on 31 January and 2 February 1944, to elect the Patriarch of Moscow and all the Russias and to adopt regulations for the administration of the Russian Orthodox Church, was attended by G. G. Karpov, chairman of the newly-created Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church attached to the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. He welcomed the Council in the name of the Government and conveyed "its best wishes to the local Council and its labours". Karpov said:\*

The great October Revolution had established new relations between the Church and the State and had freed the Russian Orthodox Church from the obstacles which had hampered its internal activities. Without interfering in any way in the Church's internal affairs, the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church attached to the Council of the People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. acts as a link between the Church and the Government and sees that the Government laws and decrees affecting the Church are duly given effect to.

In an address from the Council of the Church to Stalin it was stated that the Council "prays that God may grant health and strength and long life to our beloved leader and Commander-in-Chief, I. V. Stalin".†

It would seem from Karpov's words that he had never heard of the Union of Militant Atheists; or perhaps he was referring to this organization when he said the State had freed the Church from the obstacles which had hampered its internal activities. Or possibly he was referring to the people mentioned in an article in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, no. 6 of 1945, which said:

Patriarch Sergei was right when several years ago he surprised the foreign correspondents in Moscow by telling them that the Russian Orthodox Church had never been more free and prosperous as under the Soviet Government, which separates the Church from the State and which did not interfere with its domestic affairs; that certain churchmen had indeed been punished, but not for their religious convictions but because they had interfered in politics and acted against the Soviet Government.

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\* *Izvestiya*, 4 February 1945.

† *Ibid.*



*For Use Abroad*

Shortly after the official blessing had been given to the Russian Orthodox Church, the international aspect of such recognition began to show itself by the visits to Moscow of clergy from other countries and visits by members of the Russian Orthodox Church to other countries. At different periods throughout 1944-5 clergy from Rumania, Yugoslavia, the Near East, America, and Bulgaria visited Russia, and delegations from the Russian Church visited Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, the Near East (including Cairo and Jerusalem), Great Britain, Greece, Iran, France, America, Finland, and Holland. These visits were arranged with the object of impressing on the clergy and people of other countries the freedom of the Russian Church. The extent to which these missions served that purpose can only be shown by the clergy of countries outside the U.S.S.R. who came into contact with the Russian Church delegates.

The newly formed Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church deals with each religion that operates today in the U.S.S.R., and not solely with the affairs of the Orthodox Church. This does not, however, mean that there are numerous other churches and religions operating inside the U.S.S.R., nor does the revival of religion mean that all churches have once again become places of worship. The position today is that, apart from the Orthodox and Eastern churches of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., there are only three other churches open, all of them in Moscow.

*The Churches of Moscow*

At the time of the Revolution there were 452 churches in the Moscow district alone. By 1936 the number open had been reduced to 42. At that time there were only three Roman Catholic churches in the whole of Russia. Two were closed down by the State in 1936 and their priests were sent to some unknown destination. Nothing has been heard of them from that day to this. By 1940 the total number of churches operating in the Moscow district had been further reduced, to 26. Of these, one is Roman Catholic, one is a Synagogue, one Methodist and Presbyterian combined, one Greek Orthodox, and the remainder Russian Orthodox.

Some of Moscow's former churches have been demolished by the Soviet—one in the Red Square to make way for an open-air café which is now disused and almost completely ruined. Another was demolished to provide a site for the Palace of Soviets, a project still to materialize. The famous Saint Basil's Cathedral in the Red Square was still in use when I left Moscow, but not as a place of worship. It is occupied by the Moscow Institute of Architects. The revival of religion brought about hurried renovations to the Orthodox churches in use, but the remainder of the churches of

Moscow today are storehouses, garages, dwelling houses, etc., and are in an almost complete state of disrepair.

There is undoubtedly freedom to practise religion within the U.S.S.R. today but the churches are carefully watched by the authorities. In the Roman Catholic Church, for example, there are never less than three shorthand writers in attendance at each service, whose duty it is to take down every word spoken by the priest. On the occasion of big religious festivals, the principal Orthodox Church of Moscow resembles a Hollywood first night rather than a religious service. Klieg lights, movie cameras, and all kinds of photographic apparatus are installed at vantage points in the cathedral, while Soviet Press photographers flit in and out among the officiating clergy obtaining close-ups of those taking part.

### *"New Jerusalem"*

An old monastery called "New Jerusalem" came into prominence with the plan for the restoration of the Church. The monastery was mentioned by one Akimov, a Moscow architect, in an article published in the Moscow *Bolshevik* on 30 November 1944, describing the beauty of the monuments of Russian architecture which had been destroyed by the Germans.

This old monastery contained wonderful architectural features, portion of which had been seriously damaged during the war. It is doubtful whether modern Soviet craftsmen will ever be able to restore it to its former glory. The monastery is situated some thirty miles out of Moscow in what was formerly the town of Istra. A guide conducts visitors round the principal church within the monastery grounds and relates how the Germans, in retreating from Istra, deliberately attempted to blow up the church. That is the official story, but the true story of New Jerusalem is not revealed to visitors. It can be told in a few words. It happens that prior to the German invasion the monastery was used by the N.K.V.D. as a prison labour camp for political prisoners. With the onward march of the Germans on Moscow, the prisoners were removed. Either with the capture of Istra by the Germans, or during their retreat from that town, practically all the buildings in the town were levelled to the ground. During the German occupation of Istra the principal church in the monastery was used as an ammunition dump. The explosion of this dump in the final battle for the town destroyed a large portion of the church, leaving the remaining buildings within the walls of the monastery intact.

The story of Istra and its old monastery provided one of those paradoxes frequently met with in the Soviet Union. As mentioned, practically every building in the town was levelled to the ground, leaving many people homeless. Towards the end of 1944 a visitor

to the town would pass by the dug-outs of Soviet citizens, who, on returning to the town and finding their homes destroyed, had made temporary shelters by digging into the ground and living there. On entering the monastery the visitor would see Soviet workers busily clearing away rubble from the damaged church. He would see artists perched on high ladders engaged in copying the paintings and freizes on the church walls and ceilings while the people of Istra continued to live in their dug-outs.

#### *At a Moscow Church Service*

To appreciate what the new religious policy of the Soviet Government really means to Soviet citizens, one would need to witness the scenes inside and outside the principal Russian Orthodox church during a big religious festival.

In the Russian Orthodox Church there is no provision for seating; the congregation either stands or kneels throughout the service. At the Easter service in 1944 the people stood throughout the entire ceremony, lasting over five hours. The church was packed tightly with human beings, who pressed up against the stout railing enclosing the space for the conduct of the service. The surrounding streets were crowded with people on their way to the service, while the tightly packed crowds outside the church itself extended for many yards in each direction. Some were attempting to light, or to keep alight, small holy candles, praying aloud the while.

At first extra Soviet police and plain clothes N.K.V.D. men kept the crowd back from the church entrances, but the pressure became greater as the time for the commencement of the service drew near, and they had the greatest difficulty in keeping order. At the arrival of important people such as personnel of foreign missions, the police would endeavour to form a pathway through which these people might enter. Although I was assisted by the police on my arrival I found myself at one stage being pushed backwards and forwards with my feet off the ground as the crowd swayed in an attempt to get to the door. When I at last regained my feet I found myself standing, not on the ground, but on a woman who had been knocked over in the crush and was being trampled underfoot. Another surge of people deposited me near the church doors but I never learned what happened to the poor woman. I fear she would have been very badly injured, if she escaped death.

The scenes inside the church were as amazing as those outside. People were fainting in the crowd but there was no room for a fainting person to fall and he or she had to be hoisted above the heads of the crowd and passed over to the doors, where the police guarding the entrances would allow him or her to be carried out. Since the unconscious victims could not be taken through the dense crowds outside, they were dumped in a small alcove near the en-



trance. It was not possible to discover how many people were piled up in this alcove, but I saw many inert figures lying there and more being taken out of the church while the service was in progress. No attempt seemed to be made to treat them while I was there, and I am sure many deaths must have occurred.

Conditions inside the church were if anything more trying than those outside. At least the crowds outside had fresh air. The air inside the building was foul and stagnant and, condensing up near the ceiling, was continually dropping down like rain through a leaking roof and extinguishing the candles carried by worshippers. The air was thick with the haze from the burning incense and foul with the odour of bodies mingled with that of incense.

It was a miracle that the barriers surrounding the area set apart for the service did not give way under the terrific strain. Such an occurrence would have resulted in tragedy, for many would have been trampled to death.

Movie cameras and Klieg lights operated throughout the service, and Press photographers entered the area of worship, going backwards and forwards and sometimes having their cameras within a few feet of the officiating priests.

One had only to observe the people's faces to realize that they had not come out of mere curiosity but with a deep sense of faith that could never be stamped out.

### *The Defence of Moscow*

Probably the most outstanding tribute paid to the Russian Church was the bestowal of medals on Metropolitan Nikolai and a number of other leading Moscow priests "For the Defence of Moscow". When Moscow was in danger of falling into the hands of the Germans, a large-scale evacuation took place, included in which were Metropolitan Nikolai and his fellow priests. At the presentation of these medals on 6 October 1944 Metropolitan Nikolai said:\*

We beg of you to convey to our beloved leader Iosif Vissarionovich warm wishes that he should enjoy health for many years, that he should enjoy health to inspire terror into the enemy, and bring happiness and glory to our native land, and we beg you to accept the assurance that the Moscow clergy, together with the whole of the Russian Church, will devote all its forces to the service of our dear homeland in the difficult days of the war and in the days when it shall flourish, in the future days of peace.

One final remark on the question of religion. Stalin did not only learn from the Germans the means of introducing his own clergy, but he is now copying their ways. In a specially selected site adjacent to Moscow there is a training school in which former German prisoners of war are undergoing religious training to enable them to be ministers of religion in Germany if, and when, the Soviet deems it expedient to use them.

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\* *Pravda*, 9 October 1944.

## CHAPTER XI

### MARRIAGE, MOTHERHOOD, AND DIVORCE

#### *Tightening the Marriage Laws*

THE falling birthrate throughout the U.S.S.R. has undoubtedly caused the Soviet authorities considerable concern over the past ten years, although no public pronouncement to this effect has, as yet, been made. On the contrary, Soviet propagandists abroad maintain that the birthrate in the U.S.S.R. is the highest of all countries, owing to the standard of living and the economic security guaranteed under the Stalin Constitution.

In the early part of the Russian Revolution the freedom with which abortion could be practised, and the ease with which divorce could be obtained considerably affected the birthrate, and in 1926 comprehensive marriage laws were introduced. Their object was to tighten the ties of marriage and to encourage family life. These laws, entitled the *Code of Laws on Marriage and Divorce, the Family, and Guardianship of the R.S.F.S.R., 1926*, operated from 1 January 1927.

Under the Code, registration of marriage became compulsory. Marriages with religious rites were not legally recognized if contracted after 20 December 1917. The laws regulating divorce were unaltered. They required that an application by either party for a divorce be granted without cause or reason being given by the applicant. A mother had the right to bring a case to Court to establish the parentage of her child and to obtain from the Court an order requiring the father to provide for its maintenance. Abortion was a personal matter for the party concerned.

The Code did not have the desired effect of strengthening family ties and increasing the birthrate. This can be seen by the introduction in 1936 of amendments by which abortion became illegal. Legal provisions relating to alimony were strengthened, and attempts were made to discourage divorce by making the applicant attend the registrar's office in person and by charging increased fees. The 1936 amendments also introduced a system of bonus payments for mothers of large families.

These amendments were introduced by the Council of People's Commissars, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and

the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. By joining the Trade Unions as parties to the amendments the intention was to have the Trade Union organization in operation in popularizing the laws. Crèches, kindergartens, mothers' requirements, etc., were the sole responsibility of the Trade Unions, and any complaints were directed to them; the Party and the Government were given credit for the introduction of measures to which the Trade Unions failed to give full effect.

### *The Drive for Babies*

The making of the new laws introduced a campaign for large families—a campaign in which every section of the Party organization took a prominent part. Propaganda concerning rest homes for expectant mothers, crèches, kindergartens, etc., was spread abroad. In fact everything was done to persuade women to bear more children—short of introducing Socialist Emulation and Stakhanovism into child-bearing, and establishing sufficient crèches and rest homes for mothers and expectant mothers.

Special bonuses were paid with the birth of the seventh child in a family. For the first five years of the child's life the mother was paid 2000 roubles per annum. Mothers with ten children received an immediate grant of 3000 roubles on the birth of another child. After two years an annual grant of 3000 roubles was made for the next four years. All families having the necessary number of children were entitled to benefit. Deceased children were not counted in computing the grants.

By a further amendment to the laws on 14 November 1936 mothers who at that time had seven, eight, nine, or ten children, the youngest being less than five years old, received an annual grant of 2000 roubles until the youngest child's fifth birthday. Mothers with eleven children, the youngest less than five years of age, received a single grant of 5000 roubles in 1936 and 3000 roubles per annum until the child's fifth birthday. This amendment merely cleared up the gaps left by the first law relating to bonuses—the earlier law dealt only with mothers of six children on the birth of the seventh child, and mothers of ten children on the birth of the eleventh child, leaving those between the two stipulated groups of mothers without bonus payments.

On 28 December 1936 another amendment was made with the interesting title of: "Concerning Measures for the Improvement of Labour Discipline and the Practice of State Social Insurance and the Struggle against Abuses in this Field". This amendment reduced the period of leave formerly given to pregnant women and nursing mothers from 56 days before and 56 days after confinement to 35 days before and 28 days after confinement. It also provided that such leave and payment was conditional on the person con-



cerned having worked at the factory or undertaking for not less than seven months immediately prior to the leave being due.

It is of interest here to note that while the Trade Unions organization was a party to the law of 1936, it was not made a signatory to the amendment of 14 November 1936 extending the bonus payments. The organization was, however, a signatory to the amendment of 28 December 1936. Since the latter amendment did not improve conditions for mothers, here again the Trade Unions had to take any criticism arising from the amendment while the party and the Government would be free from blame. This technique of casting responsibility on the Soviet Trade Unions is commonly practised throughout Soviet undertakings whenever the conditions of the workers are at stake. This has been discussed earlier in the book.

Under the amended laws of June 1936, a payment of 50 roubles was demanded for the first divorce, 150 roubles for the second, and 300 roubles for the third. No provision was made for payments beyond a third divorce, but there does not appear to be any law against a person obtaining more than three divorces.

The war caused a cessation of the campaign for an increased birthrate, not because the authorities were satisfied with the birthrate, but simply because everything became completely subordinated to the conduct of total war.

#### *Medals for Mothers*

The success of the birthrate campaign from 1936 to the outbreak of war can best be judged from the most recent laws relating to marriages. By special decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet dated 8 July 1944 many significant alterations were made to the laws relating to maternity, bonuses, divorce, and taxation of bachelors and people with small families.

Special titles and medals were introduced for mothers of large families. Under the new laws medals were bestowed on mothers according to the number of their children, in the following order:

Mothers of 5 children: Maternity Medal, 2nd class.

Mothers of 6 children: Maternity Medal, 1st class.

Mothers of 7 children: The Order of Maternal Glory, 3rd class.

Mothers of 8 children: The Order of Maternal Glory, 2nd class.

Mothers of 9 children: The Order of Maternal Glory, 1st class.

Mothers who have borne and brought up 10 children: The title of Honour of "Heroic Mother", together with the Order of Heroic Mother and a scroll from the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

These Orders and medals, together with their titles, were to be bestowed on mothers after the last child had attained the age of one year, provided that all previous children of the same mother were still alive. Special consideration was given to mothers of children who had died or been reported missing on war fronts.

*Bonus Payments*

The new scale of bonus payments and monthly allowances was designed to cover a far greater range of mothers than previously. Formerly only mothers of seven or more children could benefit. The new scale of payments was as follows:

<i>Condition of Payment</i>		<i>Lump Sum Payment (Roubles)</i>	<i>Monthly Payment (Roubles)</i>
Mothers of two children on birth of third		400	Nil
" " three " " " " fourth		1300	80
" " four " " " " fifth		1700	120
" " five " " " " sixth		2000	140
" " six " " " " seventh		2500	200
" " seven " " " " eighth		2500	200
" " eight " " " " ninth		3500	250
" " nine " " " " tenth		3500	250
" " ten " on birth of each subsequent		3000	300

Under this scheme the monthly payment ceased on the child's attaining five years of age. Mothers with seven or more children in receipt of annual payments under the previous law continued to receive that money but came under the above scale with all subsequent children.

*Encouraging Illegitimacy*

Widows and unmarried mothers giving birth to children after the introduction of the new law receive State grants for the maintenance of such children of 100 roubles per month for the first child, 150 roubles per month for the second child, and 200 roubles per month for three or more children. Such grants are payable until the child attains the age of twelve years. These special State grants are paid in addition to the payments provided in the general scale of bonuses and payments referred to above. Should a widow or unmarried mother marry, it does not affect her right to continue receiving the special grants together with the ordinary payments.

If a widow or unmarried mother wishes she can place the child or children born out of wedlock in a Children's Home. The Home is obliged to take the child or children for maintenance and upbringing at State expense. A mother may at any time take her child back. All payments made to her in respect of a child or children placed in a Children's Home cease when the child enters the Home, but are renewed immediately the mother takes the child back. The

unmarried mother is specially exempted from taxation laws applying to bachelors and people without children or with small families.

It can be seen that the State encourages the bearing of children out of wedlock. It is most significant that the unmarried mother, in the event of subsequent marriage, is permitted to retain her special State grant, while married women with the same number of children are not entitled to such extra money. The grant is payable until the child attains the age of twelve, but the age limit for the child of a married woman is five years. In the field of taxation the unmarried mother also gains an advantage over the married woman with one or two children, who is called upon to make payments of bachelor tax. An instruction of the Supreme Soviet contained in the laws makes it obligatory for the establishment of "special rest homes for poor pregnant unmarried women".

It is also significant that under the former laws an unmarried woman had the right to take Court action to establish the parentage of her child and to obtain a Court order for payment of maintenance by the father. Under the new laws such right has been taken away. Today, therefore, any male in the U.S.S.R. is free of all responsibility for children born to him out of wedlock.

In the new enactments, the section of the 1936 law which made abortion illegal was repealed. This was not because abortion was to become legal, but because the practising of abortion was dealt with in special sections of the Criminal Code of the R.S.F.S.R., thus making abortion a serious criminal offence. What the 1944 law did do, however, was to instruct the Public Prosecutor's Organization to tighten up the administration of this particular law and to prefer criminal charges against anyone responsible for illegal abortion, or for compelling women to resort to it.

Although abortion has been illegal since 1936, it continued to be fairly widely practised even after the 1944 law, and can be obtained fairly cheaply, particularly if the person seeking the operation can pay in foodstuffs. The freedom with which abortion could be practised up to 1936 has no doubt left its mark—and methods—on the present generation of Soviet citizens and is largely responsible for its widespread practice today.

#### *Benefits to Expectant Mothers*

A further amendment made by the 1944 laws related to periods of non-work for expectant and nursing mothers. It did not fully restore the former periods totalling 112 days, but it improved on the existing position by increasing the time from 63 days under the 1938 law to 77 days. A woman is allowed 35 days before and 42 days after confinement. In the event of twins the period after confinement is extended to 56 days. A further provision makes it mandatory on the heads of enterprises to grant the normal period



of annual leave (usually 12 days) to coincide with the pregnancy and childbirth leave of the mother.

By these laws, pregnant women are not allowed to work overtime. Nursing mothers while feeding their children are not allowed to do night work.

In some cases, labour has been reorganized, especially in the mines of the Kuybishev Coal Trust, so that pregnant women are excluded from working in the night shifts and are transferred from underground to surface workings.\*

Pregnant women now have the right to have their supplementary food allowance doubled after the sixth month of pregnancy, until four months after childbirth while nursing the baby. Heads of factories and enterprises were directed to help pregnant women and nursing mothers by supplying them with extra foodstuffs from the auxiliary farms.

For those mothers fortunate enough to have their children cared for in crèches or kindergartens there is a special reduction of admittance fees. Mothers of three children whose wages do not exceed 400 roubles per month receive a 50 per cent reduction. Mothers with four children whose wages do not exceed 500 roubles per month receive a similar reduction. Mothers with five or more children receive the 50 per cent reduction irrespective of their monthly wages.

### *Crèches*

Contrary to the general belief, in countries outside the U.S.S.R., that kindergartens and crèches in Russia are available to all children, the fact is that the accommodation for children in kindergartens and crèches is totally inadequate. Only a small percentage of children are provided for and unless the child's parent happens to be a good Party member, or a very good worker in industry, the chances of admission are remote. Directors and other high factory executives and those in the higher strata of Soviet society do not need crèches or kindergartens for their children, since almost without exception they have nursemaids for the few children they do have.

From the propaganda surrounding the first drive for an increased birthrate in 1936, telling of the "concern of the State and the Party for the care of the mother and her child", and speaking of the large network of rest homes, crèches, kindergartens, etc., one would think that there was plenty of accommodation. It now appears that such is not the case. In the new laws special directions were given to the Council of People's Commissars about the establishment of such places, requiring the Council to confirm a plan for

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\* *Manual For Guidance of Factory and Local Committees*, No. 1, February 1945.

the organization throughout the U.S.S.R. of additional homes for mothers and children, and of a network of children's crèches and kindergartens. In confirming plans for these objects, the Council of People's Commissars was also to bring about a considerable increase in the production of children's clothes, footwear, articles of child hygiene, and other necessary articles, as regards both children's institutions and sales to the general public. The Council of People's Commissars was also directed to set up a network of shops for repairing children's clothes, and to give instructions for the compulsory organization in all enterprises and institutions of crèches, kindergartens, and rest rooms for nursing mothers.

### *The Show Place*

In and around Moscow there are quite a number of crèches and kindergartens, but a visitor to Moscow wishing to look over one of them is not shown one in the city. Instead he is taken some miles out of Moscow to a fair-sized old building used as a crèche for children of workers in a nearby aircraft factory. This is the show place for tourists. Other crèches and kindergartens attached to plants and institutions in Moscow are by no means as attractive and up to date as this one. Conditions in most of these places, however, are infinitely superior to the children's home conditions. But they still leave much to be desired in comparison with similar organizations in other countries. They are certainly not up to the standard of crèches or kindergartens in Australia.

Those I saw are well kept and the children are well looked after by the staff. At the same time, one must view these institutions of the U.S.S.R. differently to those of other countries: in a State where crèches and kindergartens are rather an industrial necessity—owing to the compulsory labour of both parents—than a social amenity, there is an appalling shortage.

### *The Bachelor Tax*

As a further inducement to increase the birthrate, the laws of July 1944 increased the tax on unmarried people over twenty years of age (the legal age for marriage in the U.S.S.R. is eighteen years). The tax on people with small families was increased under the law of 21 November 1941.

This tax applies to unmarried men between the ages of 20 and 50, to unmarried females between the ages of 20 and 45, to married couples who have no children, and to married couples who have less than three children.

Citizens with no children pay a tax of six per cent of their

salary; those with only one child, one per cent of their salary; those with not more than two children half per cent of their salary. This scale applies to the ordinary taxpayer citizen. Members of collective or State farms or undertakings contributing agricultural tax pay a set annual amount of 150 roubles for those with no children, 50 roubles for those with one child and 25 roubles for those with not more than two children. For married couples, the tax is payable on the salaries of both husband and wife.

Exemptions are granted to rank and file service personnel, sergeants and petty officers (also their wives), service personnel ranking as officers of military units and institutions in the active army and navy (and their wives), women receiving special grants or pensions for maintenance of their children, citizens whose children have died or been reported missing from the fronts, students in the middle schools or institutions of higher education (both sexes up to the age of 25 years), and invalids of the first and second class.

### *Divorce Made Difficult*

Divorce laws were also materially altered by the law of 1944. It provided that a person seeking divorce must submit a statement to the People's Court giving the reasons for wanting the divorce, together with full particulars of the other spouse. The applicant is required to pay a fee of 100 roubles on the lodging of the application and statement.

Once the statement has been lodged, the Court is obliged to summon the other party to the marriage, when this person is informed of the application and statement. The person so summoned is then examined by the Court on the basis of the reasons given in the applicant's statement. The Court must also ascertain from both parties the names of any witnesses either party wishes to bring into the case. The People's Court is then obliged to summon both parties, with all witnesses, in order to bring about a reconciliation, if possible. If the People's Court fails in this attempt, then the matter is referred to one of the higher courts for hearing and determination.

The applicant is required to insert in the local newspaper at his or her own expense a notice of intention to proceed for divorce. In the event of the higher Courts deciding to grant the divorce, they are also obliged to determine which of the parties is to keep which of the children; which of the parties is to maintain the children, and the amount to be paid. They must also lay down in what manner the property of the divorced persons is to be divided, and must allot to each—according to their respective wishes—the surname which they had before marriage. (Under Soviet law,



either party to a marriage may adopt the surname of the other party.)

On divorce being granted, an entry to that effect is made in the passports of both parties and a sum of money, ranging from 500 to 2000 roubles, is paid by one or both parties to the divorce, according to directions from the Court.

## CHAPTER XII

### SOVIET FARMING

#### *I Visit a Collective Farm*

By arrangement with the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (V.O.K.S.), I was granted permission to visit a collective farm with a number of other foreign residents of Moscow.

The Society had arranged for two interpreters to accompany the party. The farm we visited was some sixteen miles out of Moscow, in the village of Tarsovska, and was regarded as the show place of Soviet collective farms—an honour that appeared to be well justified from what I saw of many others in the Moscow district.

Showing only the best to visitors is not peculiar to the Soviet Union. The difference between seeing the best in the Soviet Union and the best in other countries, however, is that national pride is generally the only motive in the latter.

In the Soviet Union one cannot visit any undertaking without first obtaining the approval of high Government officials, nor can one obtain, for the purposes of studying the economic aspect of Soviet projects, any statistical data over recent years. Visits to undertakings in the U.S.S.R. generally reveal a set routine—firstly there is a form of lecture by the chairman of the undertaking, during which he will recite its history and the plans under which it is working. From my experience I would say that directors and chairmen of these undertakings commit these particulars to memory beforehand, and once put off the track many of them find it difficult to pick up the thread of the story again. When the history of the place has been reviewed, the chairman or director usually asks whether there are any questions. The question period over, inspection of the undertaking customarily follows.

The collective farm which I visited proved no exception to the routine. We were met outside the administration building by the chairman of the farm and other administrative officers, and the Secretary of the Communist Party for the district, who was well dressed in a silk shirt and good quality footwear and trousers. This made him shine out like a brilliant in a coal heap compared with the chairman and his other colleagues—each of whom, however,

was quite well dressed compared with the members of the collective farm.

After introductions, we were taken into the director's office and seated while he told us the history of the farm. It was named "Pamyet Ilyicha" after Lenin; it was formed in 1929 and had won the Order of Lenin as well as numerous certificates of merit at agricultural exhibitions. The Order of Lenin, certificates of merit, and the inevitable photograph of Stalin, were displayed on the walls of the office. A photograph of Stalin also adorned the walls of every room I saw and there was one on the front of the building, probably for decorative purposes.

Hearing of the Order of Lenin and the certificates of merit, I asked whether this particular farm was the best in the district, and the Secretary of the Party took it on himself to answer. According to him, this was not the best farm in the district, but just an average collective farm. I had an idea that the chairman of the farm would have given me a different answer if he had had the opportunity of speaking first; but since the Secretary of the Party had spoken, I had to accept his answer.

#### *The Efficiency of V.O.K.S.*

After giving us the history of the farm, the chairman—as is customary during such visits—asked if there were any questions.

In our party there were some agriculturalists who were anxious to investigate the methods used and the results obtained on the farm. My particular interest was in the working and social conditions of the people employed there.

The question period developed into a quiz session, to the confusion of the director and his comrades, particularly when we were trying to ascertain how the produce was disposed of at the end of the season. The chairman and his colleagues became tangled at each of our questions, but finally, after conferring together, they straightened things out and gave us a set of answers which disposed of sixteen per cent more than the year's production. Their attention was drawn to this and we went over the figures one by one together, while they insisted that they were correct. The total was still 116 per cent. The agronomists then decided to obtain the figures from the farm's accountant and these were produced and found to balance to our satisfaction.

During this quiz the efficiency of V.O.K.S. made itself most conspicuous. Most of the interpreting was done by one of the girls of the Society who had come with us. She was doing a good job, interpreting both ways. This resulted in the administration getting a little mixed at times with their answers, especially with the percentages.



When asked about money payments to the farmers, another girl from V.O.K.S. immediately took over. It was quite obvious that this young woman was doing her job well and was not going to give information that would be detrimental to the Soviet. It was with great difficulty that we persuaded her to answer our questions about payments. Fortunately for us, some members of our party understood Russian and could hear her misinterpreting the answers given by the chairman of the farm. She was not aware, of course, that we were not entirely dependent on her for interpretation.

After satisfying ourselves about various matters, we proceeded to inspect the farm, although the workers by this time had stopped for their midday meal. The farm covered about 1000 acres, of which 607 were under cultivation with vegetables, cereals, fruit, berries, and potatoes. There was also a series of hothouses and hotbeds for growing plants and vegetables out of season. The remainder of the land was taken up by cottages, private plots belonging to householders, sheds and grazing areas for stock and fowl-houses. The cottages in the village were all of the single-story type which are found in most Russian villages. They are built by the peasantry from logs sawn into various lengths. This collective farm owned 60 horses, 42 foals, 42 cows, 42 calves, 60 pigs, 12 sheep, and 200 head of poultry.

One has only to watch the Russian peasant constructing a cottage to appreciate the value of his work, which is performed almost entirely with a short-handled axe and a home-made band saw. And when his dwelling is completed it is of far greater durability than the brick buildings in the city, constructed by what the Soviet terms "modern methods".

### *A Farmer's Rights*

The cottages in the village were all privately owned by members of the collective farm. There was not sufficient housing for all employed on the farm, so many of the farmers rented room space in their cottages to other farmers at prices determined privately between the parties.

Ownership of a cottage carries the right to a plot of ground approximately one and a half acres in size on which the members of the homestead may grow vegetables or other commodities, all of which are their own and may be disposed of as they think fit. Ownership of the cottage and use of the ground, depends, however, on the owner's not falling out with the administration of the collective farm and being expelled.

Once expelled from the farm, a farmer immediately loses the plot of ground and all rights to trade through or in the collective farm. This means, in effect, that he may remain in his cottage or walk about the roadway, but in no circumstances may he make any

purchases in the village. Nor can he allow his livestock, if any, to feed in the grounds of the collective farm. In short, economic sanctions of the most severe kind are imposed on a member who has been expelled, and he is forced to leave and seek food and work elsewhere.

The member of the farm with whom I discussed this matter was at first reluctant to agree that expulsion from the collective farm also meant that the offender lost his home. He finally admitted that this would be the case, but could not say what would happen to the cottage. He assumed it would become the property of the collective farm.

The householder on the collective farm is permitted by law to keep one cow, for which he is required to pay an annual tax of 50 litres of milk to the State; he may also keep two calves, one pig, as many rabbits as he wishes, for which he is required to pay a tax in meat to the state, and as many goats and fowls as he desires. He must pay a tax of 50 eggs to the State for the fowls, irrespective of the number of fowls.

A farmer would not get very far with one cow, two calves, and one pig; but when he is permitted to have an unlimited number of rabbits, goats, and poultry, it should be possible for him to become independent of the farm. I asked my escort whether this would be the case. He said that no farmer would have time, after completing the work required of him on the farm, to look after many chickens or goats.

The first place we inspected was the cart shed and stables for the horses. All the horses except three were out in the fields, so there did not seem to be much point in taking us to their stables. The shed and stables were perfectly clean from top to bottom. I was soon to find the reason for our visit; for when we entered the shed we noticed some blackboards erected, on two of which were written the names of members of two teams of workers who had topped the work score the previous day. One team was from the wheat field and the other from the vegetable patches. While one section of our party was examining the record of the wheat workers, I was listening to an explanation of the principles involved in the competition and the results obtained in the vegetable fields. I was told that on the previous day a group of three women had picked 1569 pounds of cucumbers and one ton of cabbages in one shift.

I had studied the Socialist Emulation methods adopted in the U.S.S.R., so I did not need any further enlightenment on the matter. However, I had grave suspicions of the wonderful records of production attained by these Socialist Emulationists, and thought I would now test the figures given on the blackboard. Whether those figures represented a good day's work or not I do not know, but I was interested in the method used in assessing the work, so I

inquired how it was done. I asked how was the total weight of vegetables picked by these women in the one day ascertained, and was told "by so many aprons full". I replied, "Yes but that is guess-work, for one woman might wear a larger apron than another or might not fill her apron as much as another." This seemed to disconcert my hosts, and after conferring together they said, "No, it is not by the apronful. They put the vegetables into their aprons when picking, but they then load them from their aprons into a cart and it is the cartful that counts." This seemed to me a haphazard method of weighing, unless the cart, together with the vegetables, was weighed, so I asked, "Have you a weighbridge on this farm for weighing the cartload of vegetables?" This again sent the principals into a huddle, out of which they finally came and told me that the cartload of vegetables was weighed. I had to be content with this statement, since they said that I would later witness the vegetables being weighed. In the light of other information I gained I would be inclined to believe that the extremely vague apron technique was that adopted.

### *The Care of Animals*

We next inspected the cowsheds, in which we found only a bull and a couple of cows. The sheds were spotlessly clean, like the stables—in fact we were required to wipe our feet on a chemically prepared mat before entering. This may or may not have been necessary. That is a matter for a more experienced person to determine; but one did not need experience in cattle housing to appreciate the fact that the sheds had not been specially cleaned up just for our visit. From what I could gather there are fairly large numbers of women employed in these sheds compared with the total number of cattle housed, and their duty is to clear away all refuse immediately. Far more consideration is shown to cattle and horses in the U.S.S.R. than is shown to the population, so far as housing and food conditions are concerned. Anyone responsible for the loss of a cow or a horse finds himself in serious trouble. A woman who had worked on collective farms from 1939 to 1941 told me that she had seen a farmer commit suicide because a cow in his charge had died and he was afraid he would be blamed. To any person who has not lived in the U.S.S.R. this statement would appear fantastic, but unfortunately it is only too true.

On another occasion the chairman of a collective farm in the Moscow district was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for failing to provide sufficient fodder for horses, causing the death of three of them. The chairman of another farm was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and his foreman to three years for failing to isolate sick horses. A collective farmer named Martyanov was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment for carelessness in the



guarding of horses. A chairman of a collective farm in Uzbekistan was sentenced to death for illicit killing of cattle on the farm. These are only a few cases which go to prove that the statement made by my collective farm friend was not an exaggeration.

Having heard so much of the wonderful machinery on collective farms in Russia, I was naturally most anxious to know if this show place had any machines in operation. Prior to this visit I had seen hundreds of thousands of acres of collective farms in the Moscow district, none of which had any machinery other than the single furrow plough pulled by either a horse or a cow—generally a cow.

### *Some Contradictions*

After leaving the stock sheds, we were taken to a field, half of which was planted with cabbages and the rest with a crop of wheat in the process of being harvested. As we walked along I could not see any harvesting machinery or tracks and it was easy to see by the unevenness of the stubble that the wheat had been cut by a sickle or scythe, probably a sickle. However, just to satisfy myself, I inquired if machinery was used, and to my astonishment I was told it was and that the wheat in the field through which we were passing had been harvested by machine.

I do not profess to be a farming expert but I gained some knowledge of farming methods during my younger days in Australia where I worked in the fields at harvest time, and the statement that this field had been cut by machine puzzled me. Perhaps it was just V.O.K.S. efficiency experts at work again. I did not watch the wheat being cut since the workers were at lunch, but I did ask, "If this crop is cut by machinery, where then is the machinery?" and was politely informed that the workers had taken the machinery home with them.

Later, passing through a potato field where hilling was in progress, I remarked, "I dare say the hilling is also done by machinery?" Quite glibly came the answer: "Yes, it is all done by machine." Actually the machine used on this work was one of the oldest in the world, the human one, who had for assistance a short-nosed shovel, the marks of which, together with the operator's footmarks, could be seen all along the rows.

Passing by a field of cabbages being sprayed from pipes with water pumped from a nearby stream, I inquired if it was plain water or if fertilizer preparation was mixed with it. It was plain water, I was told. Later the same question was asked of the agronomist, and her reply was that she had mixed ammonia with the water before it was sprayed over the cabbages.

We were about to cross a small stream to inspect the other side of the farm when I noticed a young man endeavouring to conceal a rifle behind his back. I gathered that he was a guard and asked,

"What is that young chap doing with the rifle? Is he one of the farm guards?" The answer came back promptly, "Yes." I wanted to know why it was necessary to have an armed guard when the farm belonged to the members of the collective. "Surely," I said, "it is not necessary to guard against your own members." I was told he was not there to watch the members of the collective farm but to watch any stray people who might come to the farm to steal. Some other members of our party were in another group behind and the reply to their question about the lad with the rifle was that he was only there to shoot crows.

I mention this instance to show how two groups of people making the same inspection came away with different ideas, even though all information was given by officials of the same undertaking.

We inspected all the farm activities except the poultry and cattle herds which were grazing some distance away. I have no doubt that attempts were made to mislead me in regard to machinery on this farm, but I must say that the farm was extremely well kept. With the exception of some gooseberries that we tasted, the produce from the farm was inferior to produce of any Australian farm; but a different climate and the seed problems might well account for that.

There were 480 workers on this farm, of whom 85 per cent were women. A number of the women were wives of Red Army men and had been drafted to the farm during the war period. In addition to the regular workers, 200 children were employed on the farm during their school holidays (three months commencing in May each year). The children were from the families of members of the farm.

The village has its own school, which was closed at the time of our visit. In theory, school children are required to work only during their three months' vacation, and are given six clear days rest before returning to school, but in practice they work longer periods, especially during harvest time at the end of autumn, when all hands are required for every minute of daylight.

The total area under cultivation (607 acres) consisted of 210 acres of potatoes, 148 acres of vegetables, and 148 acres of orchard in which the chief fruit was apples; also in the orchard were grown large quantities of strawberries, 34 acres of gooseberries, and 32 acres of cereals (wheat and rye).

From these figures it will readily be seen that this farm was considerably overstocked with workers. This excessive manpower is, however, characteristic of all Soviet ventures and is not peculiar to collective farms alone. With the exception of the horses, the stock belonging to the farm and members of the farm is grazed on farm property and herded by several workers. At milking time one notices the amount of wasted manpower. Instead of herdsmen bringing the cows back to the village to be milked, the milkmaids are required to go from the village to wherever the cows happen to be grazing, to

milk them on the spot. The milkmaid, with her small bucket full, then sets off for the village, at times a good three-quarters of a mile away. There she delivers the milk and starts back to milk other cows, and so on until the whole job has been finished.

It does not seem that anyone has yet suggested timing the milkmaids on this job, although it appears to be one of the very few jobs not worked out by stop-watch. Undoubtedly walking backwards and forwards takes the milkmaids far longer than the actual milking.

### *Farm Administration*

The running of a collective farm is vested in a Board of Administrators, consisting of a chairman and eight other members. In theory all members of this Board are elected by a majority decision of a general meeting of the collective. As in other Soviet elections, it is the exception, rather than the rule, to find someone with courage enough to nominate against those selected before the meeting by the Party of the collective. In the final analysis, the personnel of the Board must be approved by the District Soviet.

On this farm the Board remains in office for six years but, according to the chairman, it may be elected every two years if members of the collective insist. The chairman said he did not know of any case in which members had insisted on that right.

The functions of the nine members of the Board are purely administrative. They fix the norms for labour days; appoint brigade leaders and allot them work to be performed; keep the records of such work by all members of the collective; and decide on the distribution between members of surplus commodities, after all reserves have been made and State requirements satisfied.

### *Division of Products*

Of the gross products of this particular farm 13 per cent is paid to the State by way of taxation, for which is paid to the collective the ruling State price; 13 per cent is also voluntarily paid to the State, and for this State prices are also paid; 25 per cent is reserved for general farm purposes, replacements, seed, etc.; 2 per cent is paid into the fund for sick and old age benefits; 6 per cent is paid to a fund for farm building repairs; 8 per cent is reserved for cultural and social work; and the balance, 33 per cent, is for distribution among members of the collective farm in accordance with the number of labour days standing to their credit.

Machinery for collective farm cultivation in the U.S.S.R. is not owned by the individual farms but by a State Trust which establishes M.T.S. (Machine Tractor Stations) where they have equipment. Each collective using this machinery for cultivation, har-



vesting, or any other work on the farm, makes a payment to the M.T.S. supplying the machinery, in accordance with a given schedule for each class of work. The payments are always made in kind. I mention this fact here to show that while officials on this particular collective farm said the harvesting of the wheat and hilling of potatoes was done by machinery, there is 'no provision in the disbursement of the farm's products for payment to any M.T.S. for work performed.

Other significant disclosures in this schedule of disbursements are: (i) The sum of 2 per cent is deducted to pay for sickness and old age pensions. In industrial and other State enterprises there is a tax ranging from 10 per cent to 17 per cent of the total wages bill for social services alone. Old age pensions—when paid—come from special State funds. (ii) The amount set aside for cultural and social work, 8 per cent, is to pay for Party propaganda work, carried on at the farm by agitators, and for Party publications.

According to figures supplied on this farm, payments to members for the previous year resulted in each receiving for each labour day 8 kilograms of potatoes, 8 kilograms of vegetables, and 24 roubles in cash.

As I have mentioned earlier, it was on the question of the final distribution of products, including money payments made, that we met with confusion. When I first inquired how much in cash each farmer would receive I was told, "About 20,000 roubles". This figure appeared to be far too high in view of information I gained of payments made on other farms, so I pursued this subject further and asked for more specified details. After much trouble—mainly because of the good services the interpreter was rendering to the State—the matter was sorted out to the apparent satisfaction of members of the collective, but certainly not to mine.

At one stage, when I had broken down the "about 20,000 roubles" to other amounts and wanted the figure the lowest paid worker on the farm would receive, the interpreter told me after much hedging, "About 5000 roubles." The figure given by the chairman of the farm in answer to my question was "about 2400 roubles"—just half as much as the interpreter suggested.

I finally ascertained that the money payments made per annum were as follows:

1. Chairman and five agronomists, 20,000 roubles each.
2. About 25 per cent of the workers received 15,000 roubles each.
3. Other members received from 5000 to 12,000 roubles each.
4. The lowest paid workers received about 2,400 roubles each.

Now, instead of all farm workers receiving "about 20,000 roubles" per annum, we had payments ranging from 2400 roubles to 15,000

roubles per annum, with the chairman and agronomist receiving 20,000 roubles per annum.

While it was possible to ascertain that only six persons received 20,000 roubles and about 25 per cent received 15,000 roubles, by some strange set of circumstances nobody knew how many, or about how many, workers would come into the other money-rate groups.

On the basis of the information given, the annual distribution among members of the collective farm, based on the payment of 24 roubles for each labour day to the credit of the worker, would result as follows:

<i>Total Number of Labour Days at 24 Roubles Per Labour Day</i>	<i>Cash Payment at 24 Roubles Per Labour Day (Roubles)</i>	<i>Payment in Kind on Basis of 8 Kilograms for Each Labour Day</i>	
		<i>Kilograms of Potatoes</i>	<i>Kilograms of Vegetables</i>
100	2,400	800	800
208½	5,000	1600½	1600½
500	12,000	4000	4000
625	15,000	5000	5000
833½	20,000	6666½	6666½

NOTE. 1 kilogram = 2·pounds 3·27 ounces.

This table is important, since it served to prove later that the information given, after all our trouble, was still incorrect somewhere.

### *Labour Conditions*

It was explained that the method of arriving at a "labour day" was to take the work of an average-pace worker in an average job as the standard in assessing a "labour day". Under this piece-work system a farm worker might have to work several days before he completes one labour day. On the other hand it is possible that a fast worker might do sufficient in one day to be credited with two or more labour days for that one day's work.

Not all the members of the collective farm have to do stipulated work to be credited with labour days. For each day worked the chairman of the collective is credited with two labour days, the agronomists are credited with  $1\frac{3}{4}$  labour days, and the brigadiers are credited with  $1\frac{1}{2}$  labour days.

Other principles followed in allotting labour days will be explained later. It is interesting to note that it was claimed that the chairman and agronomists each received 20,000 roubles per annum, on the basis of 24 roubles for each labour day to their

credit; whereas this method of allotting labour days to the executives makes it impossible for the agronomists, who are credited with only  $1\frac{3}{4}$  labour days for each day, to receive the same amount either in roubles or in kind.

Hours of work on this farm were stated to be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week. There is a two-hour break for lunch from noon to 2 p.m., making in all, a total working week of 70 hours.

Here again, I was positive we were being given what might be regarded as the working day to be attained in the distant future, rather than the maximum hours of labour worked on that farm, for anyone travelling in the Moscow district will see the collective farm workers on the job much later than 7 p.m. in the summer months.

Later I was to learn through *Sputnik Agitator*,\* the fortnightly magazine of the Central and Moscow Committee of the All-Union Communist Party, that the hours of work, especially at harvest time, were much longer than I was told operated on this farm. In a leading article instructing agitators in rural districts to ensure quick collection of the harvest it made no mistake about the hours members of the collective farms were expected to work when it told them to ensure "strengthening of labour discipline in the collective farms in order to see that every collective farmer works from dawn to sunset irrespective of the labour days earned".

This collective had a crèche and kindergarten in a series of cottages, all very clean and providing good accommodation for the inmates, who were cared for by a doctor, a matron, and several attendants. There was also another cottage reserved for use as a hairdresser's salon, doctor's consulting room, and for dentistry.

Children working on the farm were paid at a special rate which approximated 40 per cent of the value of adult work.

Workers on the farm are organized into a system of brigades and groups. First comes the brigade of 56 farmers, with a leader for each brigade. These 56 are divided into groups of seven workers, with a leader for each group.

### *Socialist Emulation*

Once the labour day is established and the work allocated to brigades and groups, Socialist Emulation commences and agitators of the collective make themselves felt in stirring the workers to greater efforts.

This Socialist Emulation first begins with a competition of worker against worker in the groups to do more than the required amount of work, and proceeds to a competition of group versus group; from the groups it extends to the brigades; from the brigades it spreads to collective farms within the one district; and from these to the

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\* No. 13, July 1944.



grand climax of the All-Union Socialist Emulation of the collective farms.

On this particular farm—although no mention was made of this side of collective farm work to us during the visit—there were 41 agitators, including 16 Communists and 6 members of the Young Communist League, all of whom (according to the Moscow *Bolshevik* of 24 August 1944) were doing good work. According to this report the agitators, besides answering questions asked by collective farm members, “cover every branch of activity on the collective including the reading aloud on the fields of newspapers to all brigades and sub-sections”. While the report praised the work of the agitators on this particular farm, it also complained that they were giving too few talks and too many readings. “The Party Bureau had recorded these agitators as giving about one thousand readings and only twenty talks over the past few months.”

Reverting to the competitions, each worker is encouraged to strive for titles such as “Best Planter”, “Best Ploughman”, “Best Weeder”, “Best Milker”, etc. When won, the titles do not allow a worker to rest on his laurels, and he must continue to compete for them at short intervals. On a larger scale, groups compete for a “Red Banner” which the winners take into the field each day to display. This banner was also subject to continuous competition on this particular farm. Every ten days the winners are announced and the banner passed over to the most successful group.

### *Stalin's Collective Farm Statute*

A matter not mentioned to us during the explanation of the method of fixing labour days and payments was the rewarding of better workers as provided for all collective farms in what is termed “Stalin's Collective Farm Statute”.

Here is a possible explanation of the much higher payments made to the “25 per cent” of the workers on this particular farm. As an encouragement to brigades to work well, a bonus of 10 per cent of labour days performed is given to members of brigades obtaining the highest crop yields or best results from stock breeding. This extra payment must, of course, come from the general pool of surplus commodities for distribution, so provision is also made whereby extra commodities to pay these bonuses are provided. Thus all members of brigades who have performed work lower than the average for the collective have 10 per cent of the labour days standing to their credit deducted. It is the age-old technique of “robbing Peter to pay Paul”, but one would not expect to find it operating in a so-called “workers' State”.

This Stalin Statute also provides for many penalties which, if introduced for workers in any other country, would be regarded

by the Communist Party there as "reactionary and Fascist laws", to be strenuously fought.

For carelessness in regard to collective farm property and other violations of labour discipline, the administrative Board is required to exact the following punishments: private or public reprimand; non-payment for labour days performed; fine to the amount of five labour days; removal to less responsible work, etc. Should the Board consider the offender beyond reform, it is required to propose the worker's expulsion at a general meeting of members of the collective.

By Government decree the minimum number of labour days to be worked on a collective farm is fixed up to 150 in the cotton growing districts, 100 in the central and northern districts and 120 in all other districts. It was apparent that these fixed labour day norms were not being fulfilled to the satisfaction of the authorities. A special decree of 15 February 1942 was issued by which all able-bodied collective farmers who failed to fulfil the minimum number of labour days without valid excuse were to be prosecuted and sentenced to forced labour on collective farms, with a 25 per cent deduction of their labour days. It was also stipulated that, should any member of a collective farm (of either sex) fail by the end of the year to fulfil the minimum number of labour days, such member would be deprived of membership of the collective and also lose his private plot of land. Our hosts did not tell us of any of these conditions and penalties.

### *A Cup of Tea*

Having concluded our inspection of the farm, which had taken us three hours, we returned to a cottage in the village for a "cup of tea" as it is generally termed on such visits to Soviet undertakings.

For anyone who has not previously received an invitation to partake of a "cup of tea", this is an unusual experience. Instead of tea to drink, one finds a real banquet set out, during which one is required to consume large quantities of vodka and other highly intoxicating liquor. This particular invitation proved no exception. We found the table laden with food, all from the farm, together with an apparently unlimited supply of vodka, wines, and cognac.

Approaching the cottage we saw a well-dressed woman who gave us the impression of being one of the millionaire collective farmers of whom one reads in the U.S.S.R., who had spent her millions in the commercial shops on clothing. This young woman was in charge of the luncheon arrangements—a job she fulfilled with outstanding success. But I could not fit her into the general picture of a collective farm and wondered just what her presence signified. I was not left long in doubt. She was not a millionaire farmer. She was better than that. On introduction, I discovered

she was no less than the Secretary of the Communist Party of the collective farm.

During lunch, held under a picture of Stalin, discussion naturally turned on agricultural matters. My thirst for information was as great as that of my Russian hosts for vodka, and that is saying a lot. The discussion finally turned from Soviet agricultural methods to an agricultural quiz on Australia and its methods of sheep breeding. How many herds of cattle and sheep did we have in Australia? After giving round figures, I was asked if it would not take a lot of people to look after them. To the best of my ability I described the difference between Australian and Soviet methods, explaining that stock was kept in paddocks, that sheep and cattle dogs were used, and that therefore it was not necessary for the grazier to have many employees.

My efforts went for nought. After a painstaking effort on my part to give a fairly clear mental picture of Australian methods, one man said, "I do not believe you." There was nothing I could do but let it go at that. After all, he was Secretary of the Party in the district and the best judge of capitalist propaganda foreigners attempt to use on Soviet people. I do not know whether he believed me or not, but I do know he wanted our Soviet friends listening to think that I was spreading "capitalist lies".

### *Unofficial Visiting*

No one is permitted to travel outside a radius of approximately a hundred miles of Moscow without special permission from the Foreign Office, but since collective farms are situated within five miles of the Kremlin in any direction, there are opportunities of travelling through the countryside without actually going on the farms. In this way I saw quite a large number of them.

Not once did I see more than a single-furrow plough in operation. During one trip I saw something I had never seen before in farm-work—teams of women pulling ploughs. There were two such teams doing this work on one collective. Attached to the plough was a rope approximately eight feet in length, with the other end tied to a wooden bar approximately twelve feet long. There were eight women breasting this wooden bar pulling the single-furrow plough, which was handled by a man. A short distance away the other team was working with four women at the plough's wooden bar, and a woman in the shafts.

As I have mentioned earlier, one must have permission to visit any undertaking within the U.S.S.R., so it was not possible for me to enter any of these collective farms without infringing the rules. It came to my knowledge, however, that a small party of men from a foreign military mission, and a member of my legation, on



one occasion asked permission of the chairman of a collective farm adjacent to Moscow to look over the farm. The chairman agreed. After introducing them to the Secretary of the Party of the farm, he took them round. Some weeks later a complaint was made by the Foreign Office about this visit and though the offence was overlooked this time a warning was issued that it must not be repeated, or a more serious view would be taken.

### *A Journey to the Urals*

Apart from collective farms of the Moscow district, I also had the opportunity while on my way to industrial undertakings in the Urals to see many hundreds of thousands of acres of collective farms on both sides of the railway.

The journey to the Urals covers approximately 1000 miles and since the train averaged less than 20 miles an hour each way I was able to see much agricultural work, as well as many other interesting—if regrettable—aspects of Soviet life.

When I made this journey the days were long, with only about four or five hours of darkness each night. One could see the peasantry in the fields as daylight broke and they did not leave until darkness fell. If members of the collective farm I have described earlier in this chapter worked only 70 hours per week, the same could not be said for their comrades between Moscow and Sverdlosh.

During the 2000 miles' journey I watched both sides of the railway for signs of machinery and the methods in use. The harvest was benign cut and brought in, and threshing was in full swing in many places, as were also deliveries of grain. During the whole journey I saw only one Machine Tractor Station (M.T.S.) and only two tractors operating, doing the ploughing in a field for winter sowing. All other ploughing I saw was with single-furrow ploughs drawn by horses or cows, or the old wooden plough.

Apart from the two tractors the only other machinery I saw were five reapers of very ancient origin. At the only Machine Tractor Station there appeared to be more junk in the yard than tractors.

One grain delivery depot adjoined a station at which our train had stopped, allowing me to watch the work there for a while. It was near knock-off time for those employed in the depot yard. The depot was surrounded by a high fence, with an armed guard at the entrance gates. He inspected the documents of those seeking admission with loads of grain. When the depot employees knocked off work, they had to line up while this guard closely inspected the papers of each worker leaving the grounds.

*Primitive Methods*

Harvesting, with the exception of the five contraptions to which I have referred, was being done with sickles, and with an occasional scythe. Without exception all the threshing I witnessed—and I saw quite a lot—was being done with flails, or with a horse tied to a peg in the ground who trotted round while the workers threw stooks of wheat or rye beneath his feet. Winnowing of the grain was done by the age-old method of tossing the grain into the air and depending on the wind to blow away the husks. These were the primitive methods of old Russia. While there has undoubtedly been a fairly large development in agricultural methods within the U.S.S.R. it certainly has not done more than touch the fringe of Russia's requirements.

*Machinery Statistics*

The latest figures that I could obtain regarding agricultural machinery in the U.S.S.R. were those of 1938, when the position stood at: 500,000 tractors, 150,000 harvester combines, 170,000 trucks and automobiles, and 104,000 "complex" threshers.\* These figures are for the whole of the U.S.S.R. however, and the total number of collective farms given for the same period was 250,000. In addition there are a large number of State farms.

From information I obtained from reliable sources within the U.S.S.R., I learned that there was a very high degree of mechanization just prior to the war, all down through the black soil country and in certain other districts. But by far the greater part of agricultural work of the country is still done by the primitive methods of old-time Russia.

Where machinery does exist there appear to be constant difficulties in having repairs effected and proper use made of the equipment. The Press is continually publishing articles attacking the bad state of repairs or "cannibalism" as they sometimes call bad attention to machines.

*Poverty-Stricken People*

During my long journey to the Urals I also had the opportunity to study at close quarters the peasantry who frequented the stations and market places between Moscow and Sverdlosk. Only at Baku had I witnessed mass poverty like this. Hundreds of peasants haunted each station; some were lying on bundles of household and personal belongings awaiting trains; others were selling products of collective farms or private gardens at the market places adjoining the railway line. At almost every stopping place there is a

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\* *Kolkhoz*, 1939.

peasant market from which passengers purchase food for the journey. Prices of food sold at these railway market places are, generally speaking, on a par with those ruling in the Moscow open markets. But, as in Moscow, the conditions under which food is sold leave much to be desired. In addition to peasants whom one might regard as gainfully employed, many men, women and children were to be seen begging from passengers. Usually they wanted food. This happened at practically every station, except the larger stations, where no doubt the authorities kept the beggars away.

Generally the peasants were dressed in little better than rags. To see a peasant with boots was unusual. A large number were barefooted and others had their feet wrapped in rags. Others wore bast shoes—a type of sandal made by plaiting bark from trees into the shape of the foot and fastening it round the ankle with bark straps.

I realize that there was a war and that the Soviet Union had been hard pressed, but I also know that the condition of the peasants' clothing was due to excessive poverty and was a disgrace to any country calling itself Socialist.

### *Jumping the Rattler*

The train itself consisted of what is called the "International" carriage and hard carriages for the remainder of the passengers. Each car had more than its full load of passengers. The International was originally fitted out comfortably with two-berth cabins and a wash room serving two adjoining compartments. There were reading lamps over the berths, and one over a small table at the end of the carriage. There were press buttons for calling an attendant. Two attendants waited on each car—at least there were two originally. Now there was no globe in either reading lamp. Of the two lamps in the ceiling, only one was in operation, very dimly at that. The bells to summon the attendants had long since ceased to function.

The Russian railway lines that I saw are laid without ballast, with the result that dust comes into the carriages when the train is moving. The attendants do their best to keep the carriage clean and, considering that the only cleaning apparatus they possess is a piece of waste and a small bundle of birch twigs, they do a rather good job. There does not appear to be any regulation compelling car attendants to keep their own clothing cleaned, and it is very difficult to ascertain the original colour of their uniforms. This, however, is not necessarily the fault of the attendants themselves, since soap is an almost unobtainable luxury in the U.S.S.R. and washing facilities are few and far between.



One drawback for foreign travellers in Russia is the toilet accommodation, and the International carriage proved to be no exception. Although it was not as filthy as the general run of them, there was only one common lavatory for this carriage. Its condition shortly after leaving Moscow became almost unbearable, with a stench that filled the whole cubicle.

However, I was travelling in luxury compared with my fellow passengers in the other carriages. The "hard" carriages are made with a series of plain wooden ledges on each side of the compartment on which the passengers pile up, together with their food, children, and other personal belongings. The way they pack on to the bunks is astounding. They cannot sit up or lie down with any degree of comfort, yet they manage somehow and appear to be quite happy about it all. It would, however, be interesting to hear their ideas of the conditions under which workers in capitalist States travel. The conditions for passengers in the hard carriages were not the worst on that train: crammed on every step, platform and buffer of the train—with the exception of the International carriage—were men, women, and children, mainly women, carrying bundles. How they managed to keep their positions was astonishing, for, as far as I could gather, many of them rode practically the whole way in this fashion.

None was a legitimate passenger. In Australia we call this "jumping the rattler". As the train pulled up at a station, they would leave their precarious positions and either mingle with the crowds at the station, or just sit on the off-side of the line, awaiting the train whistle — a signal for them to get on again. Legitimate passengers had to be on board first, so a mad scramble would take place for positions as the train moved off.

As fast as one bunch of "rattler jumpers" left the train, more would take their places. This continued from shortly after leaving Moscow until we reached Sverdlosk. The same thing happened on the homeward journey.

A trip such as this reveals that, badly off as the peasantry of the Moscow district are, their conditions are infinitely superior to those of their fellow peasants, in more remote parts of the country.

## CHAPTER XIII

### "SPONTANEOUS" DEMONSTRATIONS

#### *Looking after Stalin*

WHILE in Moscow I saw three large demonstrations in the Red Square. The Victory Parade took place on Sunday 24 June 1945, the physical culture demonstration on Sunday 12 August 1945, and the parade in honour of the twenty-eighth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution was held on 7 November 1945. Apart from the demonstration on May Day in 1945, these three were the first demonstrations to be held in the Red Square since the early days of the war.

The Red Square can hold at the most three thousand onlookers for big demonstrations. Consequently, accommodation is provided only for high-ranking personnel of foreign missions in Moscow and for others with special privileges. Security precautions taken at Red Square demonstrations leave little to be desired. If anyone wished to make an attempt at assassinating Stalin or any of his high-ranking colleagues he would need to use nothing less than an atomic bomb to break through the "security".

In the first place, only those with special invitation cards to the Square are permitted to be within three-quarters of a mile of it in any direction. The motor-car number of every person selected to receive an invitation is carefully checked by the authorities one or two days before the demonstration. A special pass to the Square, and another special pass to be displayed on the windscreen of the car, are issued late in the evening before the day of the demonstration.

From an early hour in the morning a strong cordon of civilian police (militia) is drawn across all streets leading to the centre of the city. Their duty is to permit no unauthorized car or civilian to pass down that part of the city. This cordon is at least three-quarters of a mile from the Square itself. Having passed through it, there still remain no less than four cordons of N.K.V.D. men to be satisfied as to *bona fides*. The first two cordons are apparently there merely to check the cars, for there is little difficulty in getting past them. The cars are then directed to a spot below the Historical Museum, where their occupants are made to get out and proceed

on foot up a short street between the Historical Museum and the walls of the Kremlin, at the top of which is the Red Square. Standing shoulder to shoulder across the end of this street is a third cordon composed of N.K.V.D. men, who closely examine invitation cards and personal passports before allowing the holders through. After such a close scrutiny of documents, one would not expect a further check, since it would be impossible for anyone to enter this section unless he had satisfied the first close check by the N.K.V.D. At the top of the street, however, which is not more than seventy-five yards in length, is another cordon of N.K.V.D. men who make a similar check of documents.

Facing the Red Square, several hundred yards back from the nearest entrance to it, stands the National Hotel, with the Moscow Hotel a little to the side of it but nearer the entrances to the Square. On demonstration days every window of these two hotels facing the Square must be kept closed. Special plain clothes N.K.V.D. men patrol every corridor and passageway of the hotels from soon after 7 a.m. until the demonstration is concluded and should any occupant of a room looking out towards the Square forget to close his windows, whether he be a Red Army officer staying at the Moscow Hotel or a high-ranking diplomat staying at the National Hotel, his telephone will ring almost immediately and he will be told—"You have your window opened. You must close it immediately and keep it closed!" If he ignores the telephone instruction, the N.K.V.D. man on guard in the corridor will shortly afterwards come inside and close the window for him. Diplomatic rights and privileges mean nothing on these occasions. It is obvious that special people are stationed to keep these hotel windows under the closest surveillance throughout the demonstration because word is passed immediately to the hotel in which the offending person is staying.

If a person wishes to leave his hotel for any reason during the day of a demonstration, he must leave not later than 7.30 a.m. and must remain away for the whole of the demonstration. If he does not leave at that time, he will find himself confined to his room for the rest of the day.

Before the demonstration, the streets of Moscow are decorated with small red flags, generally in groups of three. These are put into the special metal containers which are let into the walls of all buildings at intervals of about fifty yards. Hundreds of thousands of photographs of Stalin are on display throughout the city, and in the centre of the city are huge portraits of members of the Politbureau. Pictures of Marx, Engels, and Lenin are generally displayed in front of the Bolshoi Theatre.

Ceaseless attempts are made to build up idolatry of Stalin at all times, but especially on such occasions as these celebrations. One cannot look in any direction without seeing Stalin's photograph in



some shape or size, ranging from small pictures in small shop windows to large reproductions showing him dressed in military uniform.

### *Funerals*

During 1944 no transport was available for the funeral of an ordinary person and it was pitiful to witness funerals passing through Moscow. Relatives could be seen pulling roughly-made coffins set on small wooden sleds through the streets with the aid of ropes tied to the sleds.

Transport was always available for the funeral of a high-ranking Party member. A motor lorry was provided and the coffin would be decked with a red flag and flowers. Mourners were seated on chairs placed round the coffin on the truck. As a rule a large portrait of Stalin was attached to the bonnet of the truck.

### *The Victory Parade*

The demonstrations themselves were of interest to one who was in a position to assess their true purpose. The Victory Day demonstration was exclusively a show of the military might of the U.S.S.R. and included almost all sections of the Soviet war machine, apart from the air force, the navy, and medical sections of the army.

The original arrangements were for the great masses of Moscow workers to march through the Red Square immediately after the military parade, but it rained almost continuously during the parade and this plan was abandoned.

Members of the diplomatic corps invited to the Victory Parade were requested by the Soviet authorities to appear in full diplomatic uniform with all Orders. This request appeared to me out of place, coming from a so-called workers' Government, though quite in keeping with the trend towards complete militarization of the workers.

Despite the rain, the demonstration went through on schedule practically without a hitch. This, to me, was not such a remarkable feat of organization, for, knowing the methods adopted to ensure success it would have been surprising had a major hitch occurred to interfere with the display.

The personnel participating were limited to ranks not lower than non-commissioned officers with not less than three decorations, thereby ensuring not only good appearance but utmost attention to detail.

A full dress rehearsal took place each night between midnight and 3 a.m. for a fortnight before the parade.

*The Physical Culture Parade*

The Victory Parade was undoubtedly a wonderful spectacle; but compared with the physical culture display later in the year it paled into insignificance as far as magnificence was concerned. No less than 23,000 men, women, and children took part in this display. Some were dressed in the national costumes of various Republics, others in the uniforms of various sporting bodies. They were selected from all parts of the U.S.S.R. and represented the cream of the Soviet Union's sporting and physical cultural activities. Large differently coloured silk flags carried in the march past contributed to a most spectacular and colourful scene.

Naturally thousands of pictures of Stalin were a feature of the display. Every group carried one at its head. In some his profile was woven into the centre of almost transparent silk flags or banners, and sometimes it was woven into the pattern of rugs and carpets from the eastern regions of the U.S.S.R.

The Red Square itself was almost entirely covered with green carpet. The laying and sewing together of this was done the previous day by hundreds of ill-clad women; and the drabness of their clothing should have put to shame those responsible for dressing the participants for the display on the following day.

I have never witnessed anything so magnificent as this physical culture display, apart from the newsreels of some years back of the Hitler Youth parades. The Moscow film studios made colour newsreels of it for exhibition in the theatres of the U.S.S.R. and abroad. I saw a preview of these films, and though they do not record everything in the display, the colorfulness and magnificence of it all has been captured. Boys, girls, men, and women in thousands, all looking the picture of health and as brown as berries, gave graceful and efficient performances in every aspect of the demonstration; and leading artists from the theatres and circus performed dare-devil acrobatics. The display, like the previous demonstrations, went through without a flaw.

Sport and physical culture in the U.S.S.R., like all other activities that require the co-ordination of people in an organization, are completely under State control. They are organized principally through the Soviet Trade Unions in urban areas and the Young Communist League in rural areas. This aspect of Soviet culture is developed primarily for war purposes. Frequently articles appear in the Soviet Press, by the Communist Party, Trade Unions or military leaders, stressing the value of sport and physical culture to the armed forces of the Fatherland. Workers are urged to develop themselves through these channels so as to be physically fit to defend Russia.

Throughout the demonstration the link with the military was continually made evident by groups of people carrying arms and

other war equipment and conducting mock battles as the procession went past the reviewing stand. As far as I can see, there is no point of difference between physical culture organization in the U.S.S.R. and the Joy Through Youth movement so efficiently run in Hitler's Germany.

All taking part in this particular demonstration were relieved of work for one month before the Parade and taken to special camps on the outskirts of Moscow, there to be fed on a special diet and to bask in the sun all day in order to acquire some of the tan which showed itself so prominently in the march. Each night they were brought into Moscow to rehearse their positions and the parts they were to play. This included the spontaneous breaking-up of the various events all over the Red Square, to rush *en masse* to Lenin's tomb and shout greetings and thanks to Comrade Stalin, who, with his colleagues, was to occupy the reviewing stand on top of Lenin's tomb on the day of the demonstration.

I learned from reliable sources that the cost of this demonstration was 771 million roubles. No doubt the authorities hoped for compensation from favourable propaganda in outside countries.

There was no organizing of Moscow workers for the physical culture display, but the display was again staged for two days in the following week at the Dynamo Stadium of Moscow, which holds 60,000 people. I did not ascertain how the allotment of tickets to workers and others was arranged, but out of a population of about five million, less than three per cent were privileged to witness this magnificent demonstration.

### *Twenty-Eighth Anniversary of the Revolution*

The show for the twenty-eighth Anniversary of the Revolution was a military demonstration, slightly less magnificent than the Victory Parade but of similar character, with midnight rehearsals beforehand. The display concluded shortly before noon, when large numbers of Soviet police took up positions on both sides of the Red Square, thereby reducing it to half its width and forming a passageway through which the workers were to march. Their part in this demonstration is of interest.

From the early hours of the morning workers were required to form at given points, there to await their turn to march through the Red Square as a demonstration of their loyalty to the Revolution and especially to their "Great Father, Teacher, Friend and Leader, Comrade Stalin".

### *The Workers' Part*

It is not compulsory for workers to participate in these demonstrations any more than it is compulsory for them to vote on election day, but the consequences of non-participation are much the same.



I have known instances of agitators telling workers that their failure to be in their places for this celebration would be regarded as counter-revolutionary, and it is no light matter in the U.S.S.R. to be regarded as such. I have known other cases in which workers have been threatened by the Trade Union Committee of the undertakings with a fine for non-participation.

To ensure the utmost support for this "spontaneous" demonstration by the workers, they are divided into small groups or brigades, with a leader for each group whose duty it is to see that all in his group participate, and that anyone who does not is reported to the authorities. It does not matter if they are required to stand in the streets for hours awaiting their turn to move off—the main thing is to have them there in their places.

On the occasion to which I refer, after the police had formed up in the Red Square, the signal was given for the first of the workers to march in from three different entrances at the city end of the Square. As they converged into the passage made by the police, the march developed into a mass of people moving slowly through the Square. To assist them in paying homage, a "cheer-chaser" continuously referred through the amplifiers to Stalin's wonderful work and leadership and called for "cheers for Comrade Stalin". It was interesting to watch general reactions. At first there was somewhat mild cheering in the workers' ranks, and as the march went on the cheers became fainter and fainter.

So many workers were on the streets for this demonstration that many were sent home as darkness fell and had no chance of passing through the Red Square.

There is certainly one thing in which the Soviet Union leads the world, and that is in its capacity to organize "spontaneous" demonstrations.

## CHAPTER XIV

### SOVIET INDUSTRY

#### *No Genuine Trade Unions*

IN Soviet industries and undertakings one finds practices, which, if introduced in industry in the democracies, would undoubtedly cause serious upheavals led by the Trade Unions. If Soviet workers were able to organize genuine Trade Unions and to express freely their views and objections to such practices, a struggle for better conditions would take place, during which many of the bad features of Soviet undertakings would be eliminated. But unfortunately the Soviet worker is not free to organize for better conditions, nor is he free to express his opposition to, or dissatisfaction with, any of the laws relating to his working or living conditions.

He has full freedom to criticize his factory heads for their failure to fulfil production, or to criticize his local Trade Union officials for failure to ensure better food and clothing. Complaints about the state of housing accommodation and the hundred and one things that are everyday requirements in any other country are not to be directed against the State, but against his Trade Union.

There exists in the Soviet Union what is termed the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (A.U.C.C.T.U.). It is the head of some 170 or so different Trade Unions, all of which are under its guidance and direct control. That organization is in turn part of the State administrative structure, bound to and guided through the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In no sense can it be regarded as a Trade Union organization such as is known in democratic countries.

Apart from the administration of the Social Insurance scheme, rest homes, sanatoria, organization of physical culture and sporting activities, establishment and maintenance of crèches, kindergartens, etc., the chief and most important function of the Soviet Trade Unions is to enforce on members the decrees and orders of the State and to ensure industrial discipline in all industries and undertakings. Anyone who has been associated with Trade Unions in a democracy, and who goes to live in the U.S.S.R. for any length of time will soon fully appreciate that the Soviet Trade Unions are merely instruments of the State, designed to maintain indus-

trial discipline at home. They act as buffers for the State against the requirements of their own members, and at the same time they carry Soviet foreign policy into the Trade Union movement of outside countries.

A leading article in *Trud*, official organ of the A.U.C.C.T.U., on 11 December 1945, clearly placed the relationship between the Soviet Trade Unions and the Communist Party beyond all doubt. This article summed up the work of the Plenum of the A.U.C.C.T.U. in the early part of the month, and said:

The Party teaches us that when the correct line has been worked out and a correct decision taken, success depends upon the organized work in carrying out such decisions. *It is the duty of the Trade Unions to ensure the carrying out of the decisions of the Communist Party.*

### *The State Determines Wage Rates*

Unlike the Trade Unions of other countries, Soviet Trade Unions have no say in fixing the wage rates or working conditions of their members, except to see that such wage rates and working conditions as are from time to time prescribed by the State are adhered to by the respective undertakings. In this latter respect the Soviet Trade Unions always place the interests of production before those of their members. That is to say that if the law of the State cannot be fulfilled without interfering with the volume of production, the Soviet Trade Unions will have no hesitation in allowing the law to remain a paper law to assure the State of the full amount of output.

The only occasion when the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. are consulted about wages—except when wages for the staff of the Trade Unions themselves are fixed—is when a new job or process is first introduced into a factory. In theory, the Trade Unions do have a say, but in practice they can do little but agree with the rates suggested by the management of a particular plant.

On the introduction of some new process the practice is for the factory management to select the worker or workers necessary. Such workers are then given a month's work on the new job at the monthly wages they were earning in their previous occupation. At the end of the month the management and the factory Trade Union Committee confer as to the daily norm required of workers on this new process and the piece-work rates to be paid. Should they fail to agree, the management then confers with the Central Trade Union Committee of the district and industry concerned. If this gathering also fails to agree, the whole matter is submitted to the A.U.C.C.T.U., which decides the production norm and the wage rate, such decision being final.

That, in theory, is the machinery. I tried to ascertain from



leaders of Soviet Trade Unions, representatives on the job, and factory directors how many disputes over fixation of wage rates had taken place, but was unable to find anyone who could remember an instance in which no agreement was reached on the job. Not even the President of the A.U.C.C.T.U. could remember a case. Having learned a great deal about conditions of workers on the job in Soviet industry, I was not surprised that no specific instance could be mentioned of workers on the job failing to agree with the management.

In cases other than those mentioned above the norms of production, the categories into which workers are placed, and conditions of employment are fixed entirely by the State through its various commissariats—without reference to, or consultation with, the Trade Unions in any way. Directors of the various factories have no say themselves in this matter. Their job is to receive from the commissariat for their industries particulars of the plan of production, and how the wages, norms, and workers are to be used in the factories, and to carry out the plan of production according to that schedule.

Whenever possible the system of piece-work prevails throughout the U.S.S.R. When one realizes that all the work on collective farms is on a piece-work payment system it will be readily seen that piece-work can be carried out on a very extensive scale. So much so that on a population basis the number of workers on fixed monthly salaries are not more than thirty per cent of the total working population. This method of fixing the norms (daily production requirements) and piece-work payments does not result in any given set of norms or prices being paid to all workers throughout any given industry. Each undertaking is taken individually for the purpose of wage and norm fixation. Consequently one cannot take the wage, or norm, operating in say, a boot factory, and say that the same wage and norm is applied to all boot factories, even within the one district.

For setting norms of production and piece-work prices, workers are divided first into categories, which, though varying from industry to industry, are, generally speaking, spread over nine classifications. Wage rate and production requirements for workers in each of these categories are then established and the norm of production and pay for each category so fixed remain stable for twelve months.

In actual practice, the minimum amount of work required for minimum wage rate could be regarded as the least amount of work and wage rate for any worker within the specified categories. For example, in one large footwear manufacturing plant that I inspected, workers were in nine categories and 75 per cent of them were on piece-work. Workers within the first and second categories had a

set wage rate of 130 and 140 roubles a month respectively. These two classes of workers could not, by working harder, increase that figure, since they were not employed on piece-work, but were required to keep up with production in the particular operations on which they were engaged. The workers in these two categories, together with office staff and guards, constitute the 25 per cent flat rates.

Workers in the remaining seven categories, all employed on piece-work, had their respective norms of production and monthly wage rates for such norms set. The wage rates ranged from 157 roubles 30 kopeks a month in the third category, to 339 roubles 4 kopeks a month for the highest wage group in the ninth category. This monthly rate is based on a piece-work price which gives the minimum norm of production required for the worker's category. All work done over and above the monthly set norm is paid for at progressive piece-work prices, which, though an advancement on the fixed price for the norm of production, is not very important from a wage point of view in the long run, as will be shown later.

In this particular undertaking, all workers in the piece-work categories exceeded their norm of production and consequently earned higher wages per month than those set by the original norm. Taking the average wage in the remaining seven categories, their monthly earnings rose from 157 roubles 57 kopeks to 266 roubles for the third category, to 580 roubles against the norm wage of 339 roubles for the ninth category.

These wage rates, incidentally, were for a working week of 57 hours.

The norms of output and base wage or piece-work prices are reviewed every twelve months and whenever possible new norms and piece-work rates are fixed. (The Soviet Trade Unions take an active part in condemning the administrators of plants and factories who do not promptly attend to this adjustment of norms and piece-work prices.)

#### *Socialist Emulation*

It is during the intervals between these wage and norm reviews that Soviet Trade Unions and Communist Party organizations and cells within the various Soviet undertakings play a rather important part in assisting to reduce costs for the State at the expense of workers. This they do by fostering and enforcing "Socialist Emulation", or the pitting of worker against worker. I have referred to this in a previous chapter.

A large plant is first divided into a given number of factories, which are then divided into sections. Within the sections the workers are divided into brigades, which, according to the A. U. C. C.T.U., must not consist of more than twenty workers, including the leader.

The first move is to have worker compete with worker within these brigades for higher output; from there, brigade challenges brigade within the section, section challenges section within the factory, then the factory challenges factory within the plant, all for higher output. Generally this will take the form of a brigade, section, or factory challenging workers in similar roles in the industrial cog to Socialist Emulation. Competition for production goes on throughout Soviet industry with plants finally challenging plants and industries challenging industries, finishing with the All-Union Socialist Emulation Competition.

On occasions calling for celebration, such as 7 November, Red Army Day, May Day, the anniversary of Lenin's death, and so on, this Socialist Emulation "in honour" of the particular celebration is commenced by the Trade Unions, and fantastic results of workers' production are disclosed as the competition proceeds.

It is frequently possible to read of workers in these competitions exceeding their norms of production by over 1000 per cent or producing one year's norm of work in a week. Whether this deceives the ordinary Soviet worker or not, I cannot say, but I do know this Socialist competition has been going on for years and appears to be a constant source of worry to Soviet Trade Unions.

The excessive output claimed for Soviet workers is all part of carefully prepared propaganda, whereby everything possible is done to get the maximum results from a worker. The worker is timed during this stunt by stop-watch. The time is then multiplied by the remaining seconds or minutes of the working day and the result of this calculation is given out as an actual accomplishment of production.

To reward the workers for their efforts towards higher output, apart from giving them extra money, the Soviet Trade Unions insist on factories and plants keeping special books for recording names and achievements of employees regarded as "good workers".

By a decision of the twelfth Plenum of the A.U.C.C.T.U. at the end of 1945 it was decided that winners in monthly Socialist Emulation drives should be given the titles of "Best Machine Operator", "Best Steel Smelter", "Best Miner", "Best Cutter", "Best Driver", and so on throughout all occupations.

Each title is competitive, and is lost if the holder fails to win it in any month.

Other rewards are for artists employed by the undertakings to paint and draw pictures of Best Workers, to be prominently displayed within the grounds of the works. Some of these Best Worker pictures I have seen in larger undertakings were approximately twelve feet high by six feet wide.

Some Best Workers in one large undertaking in the Urals who maintained their titles for six months had their names engraved



on a huge granite honour roll. I asked the director what would happen to this roll if a worker ceased to be a Best Worker for some reason or other. I was told such a thing could not happen. Despite my efforts to ascertain why it could not happen, I failed to obtain any further information. Apparently once a worker arrives at the stage of having his name carved in granite he ceases to be a worker and becomes an executive head of his own or some other plant in the U.S.S.R., much the same as the early Stakhanovites.

The Best Workers of course have the additional advantage of receiving better and more food in a special dining-room of the plant. Their children have better chances of being admitted to the crèche or kindergarten attached to the plant or run by Trade Unions of the district; they also have more opportunity of being granted permission by their Trade Unions to go to one of the rest homes for their holidays.

The less efficient workers are not forgotten. They are likely to have caricatures of themselves displayed at the plant. Meetings of workers within the sections are called, at which Trade Union or Communist Party representatives heap abuse and ridicule on the heads of workers who do not follow in the footsteps of the speed champions of the plant. No effort is spared through papers, meetings, and caricatures to have these slow workers toe the mark and set out after the production records of their comrades in the "Best Worker" groups.

In each section of the plant each brigade exhibits daily its output record, showing the workers in the brigade who are not pulling their weight, thus allowing Trade Union and Party apparatus in the sections to get busy on these backward ones.

### *More Work for Less Pay*

The favouritism exhibited towards the "Best Workers" and the driving of "not so good workers" to attempt greater output are undoubtedly linked with the method used to readjust production norms and piece-work prices at the end of the twelve-monthly period. In this regard the principle laid down by Stalin for readjustment of production norms at the Conference of Stakhanovites in November 1935 is still operating. Possibly no better authority in explanation of this can be given than a quotation from Stalin's speech at that Conference. After dealing with the accomplishments of the Stakhanovites in industry, Stalin spoke of the work of a woman farmer Stakhanovite who had produced 500 centners of sugar beet per hectare (equal to 20 tons per acre) against the 130 to 132 centners per hectare (from 5 tons 4 cwt to 5 tons

5 cwt per acre) produced by the other farmers. Quoting these figures, Stalin said:\*

The difference, as you can see, is not a small one. Can we set a standard of sugar beet yield at 300 to 400 centners? Every expert in the field says that this cannot be done yet. Evidently the standard for the Ukraine in 1936 must be set at 200 or 250 centners. And this is not a low standard, for if it were fulfilled it might give us twice as much sugar as in 1935. The same must be said of industry. Stakhanov exceeded the existing output ten times or even more, I think. To declare this achievement the new standard of output for all those working on pneumatic hammers would be unwise. Obviously a standard must be set which is somewhere midway between the existing standards of output and the standard achieved by Comrade Stakhanov.

This method of striking the new norm between workers with the highest and lowest outputs is the principle operating in the U.S.S.R. today. If the existing piece-work prices were to remain stable irrespective of this alteration of norm of production one might view the system differently. While Soviet Trade Union officials endeavour to convince people that this change to a new base rate does not lower the worker's wage rate, they conveniently forget that the higher norm of production is only to be attained by working faster at a lower piece-work price than formerly. The drive is twofold. It seeks not only to increase production by the individual but also to reduce its costs at the same time. As a consequence new piece-work prices are set lower than the former piece-work price but give the worker who fulfils the new norm a slight rise. Those who cannot, or do not, reach this new norm, suffer a definite lowering of their monthly earnings.

### *Staff Payments*

Foremen and forewomen in these industrial undertakings work on a flat monthly salary, but to allow them to join in the Socialist Emulation and obtain a reward a different scheme is involved.

Firstly, these executives have their own special dining-room and are granted special privileges in food, clothing and housing that even the Best Workers do not get. It also appears that the plant artist is not required to paint their portraits for display. Although I saw numerous portraits of workers round the plants I did not notice one of any executive—except, of course, the portraits, busts, and statues of Stalin to be found in all Soviet undertakings, even in undertakers' parlours.

The method of rewarding this section of Soviet workers is interesting, coming as it does from a Communist or Socialist country. Here is a concrete example. The person concerned is a member of the Party partially responsible for the exploitation of workers

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\* *Labour in the Land of Socialism.*

prevailing in the U.S.S.R. The case is that of a woman aged thirty-four who is in charge of a section of the females in the Paris Commune shoe factory. She is also a representative of that section on the Party Committee of the factory, and a member of the Party Presidium of the plant. Her base wage is fixed at 650 roubles per month. If the workers under her charge fulfil production plans for their sections by 100 per cent she receives an additional 650 roubles a month, and, for every one per cent over the plan the workers under her charge produce she receives an added five per cent of her salary. To see that she keeps up her work, these additional payments are not made monthly, but her production figures for three months are assessed and the bonus paid accordingly.

### *Military Rank and Title in Industry*

The latest trend in industrial undertakings in the Soviet is to raise the rank of foreman in the eyes of the workers. Throughout 1944 and 1945 there were continual references in the Press to the respect owed to them.

An article in *Izvestiya* of 31 January 1945 pursued the matter. Significantly, it was entitled "The Foreman Commander of a Production Unit". Factory directors were taken to task for not paying sufficient attention to the status of the foreman in their plants. The article referred to the Kirov works at Leningrad as a good example of what should be done:

For example, the title of foreman at the Kirov plant is being raised to a very high level. It is not accidental that a special dress has been introduced there, distinguishing the foreman from other workers. The foreman must be prominently in view.

The significance lies not in the fact that foremen are to be given distinguishing dress, but in the title of the article. It will be noticed that the military title of "Commander" creeps in. A special decree signed by Stalin himself was published in all Moscow papers on 4 March 1945 conferring military rank on officials of the industrial undertakings at Gorky. Under this decree, and there have probably been others, one official now carries the rank and title of "Major General of Engineering—Technical Service", and four other officials have the rank and title of "Engineer Colonel". Certainly, this was during the war.

It has been the practice in the Soviet over many years to station armed guards at all entrances to large industrial undertakings as well as within the factories themselves. (I know of one factory employing 2500 workers where there were fifty armed guards). So it would not be a radical change from the workers' point of view if Soviet industries came directly under the control and direction of the military authorities.



Whether Stalin intends to place U.S.S.R. industries on a complete military basis is, as yet, hard to say. From my experience in Russia, to me the elevation of the rank of foreman and the granting of military rank to industrial heads are forerunners of Stalin's ultimate policy in this direction.

### *Bonuses for Executives*

Reverting to wage fixation methods, one finds that high executives of industrial concerns also have a special method by which their salaries can be increased. This particular class is in a special category. They are on the lower rungs of the Soviet high strata and do not have to worry about food shortages, clothing, or bad housing. They shop in special closed stores for both clothing and food.

As a concrete illustration of how these Soviet industrial executives are rewarded, the following table of bonus payments is interesting:\*

<i>Category</i>	<i>Bonuses in Proportion to Salary</i>	
	<i>For Fulfilment of Whole Plan</i>	<i>For Every One Per Cent Over Plan</i>
Director and chief engineer	75%	15%
Assistant director, assistant engineer, chief mechanic, factory managers, chiefs of main sections	50%	10%
Chiefs of remaining sections and their assistants	25%	5%

Monthly salaries of directors in industries range from 2000 roubles a month upwards. One director receives a salary of 3000 roubles a month with bonuses according to production, which can increase his income to a maximum of 10,000 roubles a month. In addition to these monthly salaries and bonuses, the director of a plant winning the Socialist Emulation banner receives an additional 150 per cent of his salary.

### *The Normal Working Week*

Before 1940 toilers in the Soviet Union worked a seven-hour day and a five-day week. In 1940 the authorities altered this, reverting to the six-day week, with Sunday as a free, or non-working day; and the hours of work were fixed at 48 per week, i.e. eight hours

\* *The Textile Industry*, no. 9, 1945.

a day. These were minimum working hours, which now became regarded as the normal working week. On top of this came overtime. In industries where three shifts of eight hours operated, workers were required to labour seven days a week, while in the two-shift industries, hours varied from 57 to 66 hours or more a week.

Soon after war's end in Europe came the announcement of a return to the normal working week. This did not mean the five-day week and the seven-hour day operating prior to 1940. That stage in the industrial history of the U.S.S.R. is apparently to be forgotten. The normal working week is regarded as 48 hours, over six days of eight hours, as fixed in 1940.

Side by side with this there arose an agitation, led by the Trade Unions, to have this reversion to the normal working week made as speedily as possible in all industries. The plan of the A.U.C.C.T.U. was to have all industries back to the 48-hour week by September 1945. The catch was that return to the normal working week was to be effected without reduction in pay and *without reduction in output*.

Return to the normal working week and abolition of overtime was flashed abroad as an indication that the U.S.S.R. was the first country to return to normal after the war. In much the same way early demobilization plans were flashed abroad, whereas both abolition of overtime and large scale demobilization had not, when I left Moscow in February 1946, affected a great many workers or Red Army soldiers.

While the early Trade Union plan was to have return to the normal working week completed by September 1945, it is significant that the following A.U.C.C.T.U. decision was published in *Trud* of 7 September 1945:

To instruct the Central and Factory Trade Union Committees to establish control over the fulfilment of the decisions of the People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. and the People's Commissariats on the establishment in enterprises of the normal working day, and the abolition of mass overtime work and the arrangements of days off.

What was meant was that the Central Committees and factory committees of the Trade Union should use every effort to expedite production, so as to ensure that when return to the normal working week was made, and workers given their day a week off, there would be no reduction in output. The issue of *Trud* of the previous day (6 September) made the position a little clearer. In an article written by the Trade Union representative of the Uralmash plant (one of the largest heavy industry plants in the U.S.S.R.) it was stated:

The Trade Union organization of the plant considers its most important short term task to be ensuring of the transfer of all workers of the plant to the normal working day without decrease in volume of output.

It is also significant that in the issue of *Partiinoe Strodelsto* ("Party Organization") of July 1945, a paper representing the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., the following reference to return to normal working weeks is made as an instruction to Communist Party Secretaries in different districts:

The change to a normal eight-hour working day must be made gradually. The rayon committee must watch vigilantly to see that this does not bring about a fall in output, or a reduction in the rates of pay. Experience has shown us that the introduction of new technique and improvements in organization increases the productivity of labour, and therefore output need not be reduced by a shorter working day.

It does not require much experience in industrial matters to appreciate that if this desire by the A.U.C.C.T.U. and the Communist Party to have workers produce the same output in 48 hours as they did in a 57- to 66-hour week, the change-over will take some considerable time to be made fully effective. Alternatively, the already low quality of production from Soviet industries is going to sink lower.

If the authorities succeed in this drive, their success will undoubtedly reflect against workers when it comes to the readjustment of norms of work and piece-work payments.

### *Equality of the Sexes*

Women in the U.S.S.R. are regarded as having full equality with men. But to allow the position of women rest on that statement would be to neglect showing what this equality of the sexes means to the Soviet woman worker.

It is true that there are many professional women in Russia, but they are only a very small minority of the female population. The great mass of Soviet womanhood is to be found in the fields, factories, workshops and mines, and in doing manual labouring work generally.

To regard equality of the sexes or equal pay for the sexes, as an established fact within the U.S.S.R., as many Soviet propagandists in outside countries would have one do would be to disregard the many factors which go towards making this state of affairs what it is. True, the State looks on both females and males as "workers" or "employees", irrespective of sex. It is true, also, that no differentiation is made between the sexes in drafting them to industries or undertakings. Women and young girls are required to do the same work for the same rate of pay, providing they are physically able to do so.



"The first months after the Donbas had become free, the electrical stations did not work, so the miners of the Donetzki basin cut the coal with axes." So said Alexei Stakhanov, the man on whose efforts in Donetz basin coal-mines the Stakhanovite movement, which blazed through the U.S.S.R. like wildfire, was based. This statement was made by him in an article published under his name in *Trud* of 10 November 1944. It was entitled, "The Miners' Pride".

That citizens were put to work in the Donetz coal-mines with no tools other than short-handled Russian axes does not speak too highly of the development of Soviet mining and subsidiary industries. Apparently the authorities could not supply the simplest miners' tools. But this is characteristic of most undertakings in the U.S.S.R. in both peace and war. It is not so much that these Donbas miners cut the coal with axes, but that a number of the miners were young girls. The following quotation from the same article reveals this:

When I listened to Comrade Stalin's words that the Soviet women, girls and men showed valour and heroism at the labour front, I saw before me the images of Donetz coal cutters, coal drivers and fortifiers, young girls and youths who had come to the mines not long ago. They work shoulder to shoulder with experienced miners, imitate them and take not only their experience and knowledge, but the glorious traditions of the Donetz veterans.

In all countries engaged in the war women were brought into occupations formerly worked solely by males, thereby increasing considerably the number of women in industry. In the U.S.S.R. also the total number of women in industry was increased. But I do not know of any country, no matter how hard pressed for manpower, which introduced women and young girls into coal-mines. In the Soviet it was not just a wartime measure. Women under the present dictatorship in the U.S.S.R. worked in coal-mines long before World War II. A person living in the U.S.S.R. sees in the Press from time to time references to women working in coal-mines. While, no doubt, representatives of Soviet Trade Unions at conferences abroad would deny it, the fact remains that Soviet Trade Union leaders are not only cognizant of employment of women in Russian coal-mines, but fully support such employment, as can be seen from instructions issued by the A.U.C.C.T.U. to its various subsidiary bodies.

From time to time the A.U.C.C.T.U. issues a *Manual for the Guidance of Factory and Local Committees*. In the issue no. 1-2 of 1945 the A.U.C.C.T.U. dealt with measures for protection of labour in coal-mines, stressing the fact that existing protection afforded in them should be improved. Dealing with mines of the Kuybishev Coal Trust the manual claimed that as a result of the

adoption of 345 out of 400 suggestions for improved protection of labour in those mines the accident rate had been considerably reduced. Giving particulars of one particular mine the manual stated:

Conditions have in particular improved in the Dimitrov shaft thanks to the activities of the Chairman of the Commission for labour protection Veder-nikov, as the result of which there were no cases of professional injuries in that shaft all through the month of October 1944. All the adolescents have been taken out of the mine to work on the surface, they work in day shifts only and have a short working day and periodical leave. *The same has been done for pregnant women.*

As this shaft was the only one mentioned favourably in regard to measures taken for labour protection, it must be assumed that pregnant women in other mines were still working underground at the date of this manual. Nor did the manual do other than mention the foregoing measures for improvement. It did not in any way recommend all other shafts in that Coal Trust to take like action. The very fact that 345 suggestions made for improvement in labour protection at the Trust's mines were adopted does not speak too highly for conditions existing before the suggestions.

By a special ordinance of 6 March 1943 the hours of work for both underground and surface workers in mines were fixed at eight hours per shift.

*Izvestiya* of 22 March 1945 reveals that no less than 50,000 women were employed in coal-mines in the Karaganda basin. The publication *Coal*, no. 7-8 of 1945, carried a leading article on the Tenth Anniversary of the Stakhanovite movement in the coal industry. This gave a great boost to Stakhanovites in the coal-mining industry. Speaking of the work of miners in the Donetz basin the article claimed: "Stakhanovite women miners in the Donetz basin are performing 4, 9, and 11 norms each."

The article did not disclose what constituted a norm of production, but this is nothing new. Soviet propaganda and statements are so carefully worded as to withhold exact information of production figures. The probable reason is that workers on higher norms for the same work in other sections of the industry might think they should be drawing more pay or doing less work for their pay.

To obtain labour for coal-mines a decree of the Council of People's Commissars, dated 31 December 1944 (no. 12) imposed on collective farms the obligation to supply from one to two workers to be sent to the mines for periods of six or twelve months. By this decree, each collective farm is obliged to make provision for the immediate replacement, from its personnel, of any farmer sent to the mines who had left because of sickness or whose period of work in the mines had expired. As the 1938 figure for the number of collective farms throughout the U.S.S.R. was a quarter

of a million, it will be seen that the number of men and women from them—and it would be mainly women, for they constitute almost 90 per cent of their personnel—sent to Soviet coal-mines annually would be somewhere between 250,000 and 500,000.

The agreement which coal trusts are obliged to make with these collective farm conscripts, apart from certain provisions for the supply of bunks and other things, also deals with supply of clothing according to the following scale:

## CLOTHING FOR MINERS

<i>Period of Work</i>	<i>Without Consumer Goods Cards</i>	<i>Against Consumer Goods Cards</i>
After 3 months work	Boots or shoes and 2 pairs of socks or stockings	One set of underwear
After 6 months	Nil	1 set of underwear, 2 shirts and cap or beret
After 9 months	Suit or dress	Nil
After 12 months	Overcoat or jacket	1 sheet, 1 pillowcase, 1 towel

The overcoat or jacket must stand two years' wear, the other goods one year's wear. From this scale of clothing issue it will be seen that provision is made for the conscription of both sexes for coal-mining.

As can be imagined in a country where women, young and old, are employed in coal-mines, there are few jobs on which women are not employed. (There are, significantly, no women in the Polit-bureau.) I have seen women laying and repairing rail and tramway tracks, digging peat, felling timber, sawing, cutting, and carting, repairing the cobblestone streets of Moscow (only a small percentage of Moscow streets are asphalted or concreted), and making and repairing streets and roadways, including pulling heavy iron rollers over asphalted streets. I have seen women perched on rickety ladders repairing and colour-washing buildings, walking on crude scaffolding doing house or building renovations, and chopping ice from streets at all hours of the day and night with crow-bars or crude metal choppers. There does not appear to be any work too hard or too dangerous for women in the Soviet Union.

The street sweepers and cleaners to whom I referred above are not employed on piece-work but receive salaries of from 170 to 200 roubles a month. Their job is to keep the streets free of snow and ice in winter and swept and watered in summer. During the long winter months one can see these women out at all hours chipping



away at the ice with their crowbars or ice-choppers or shovelling the ice and snow into large wooden boxes which, when full, they pull to a given place to be emptied. If these workers fail to keep their particular sections of the street clean a fine is imposed by the militia (police) on duty. The fine may be 100 roubles at a time, and I know of cases in which it has actually been imposed; so if a street cleaner fails in her duties she forfeits half, if not all, of a month's salary.

### *Technical Training*

Prior to 1940 provision existed for the training of skilled workers in various crafts and undertakings, but the system was not mandatory and was based almost exclusively on the goodwill of directors of particular undertakings. They were guided in their attitude towards the training of future skilled operatives by the amount of surplus profit after all demands had been met. This, coupled with the ever increasing pressure made on them for more and more production, undoubtedly did not encourage the directors to waste the time of operatives in training young girls and boys.

I have had considerable experience in technical training and apprenticeship matters and the impression I gained from visits to Soviet undertakings was that the Soviet had set out to accomplish high production with little or no immediate regard for quality, hoping for an improvement after high figures had been attained.

What workers lack in experience and craftsmanship is made up by an abundant supply of labour power. It is this huge reservoir that enables Soviet industries to produce enormous quantities of goods, particularly in heavy industries. In consumer goods there has been no real effort to keep up with the demands and needs of the populace. I can see no possibility of this U.S.S.R. policy of "All for the heavy industry" being changed even now to bring consumer goods on the markets in greater quantities.

Almost without exception, visitors to the U.S.S.R. with any knowledge of industrial conditions and the economics of industries outside that country comment that there appear to be far too many workers employed for the given output figures. This is undoubtedly true. There is, however, an explanation of the overloading of Soviet undertakings with manpower. To say that one Australian tradesman could do the work of three to five Soviet tradesmen and produce a better quality product at the same time would be neglecting two fundamental facts: (i) Very few Soviet workmen have had the opportunity of learning their craft, because from the time they enter industry as small children, the sole aim continually impressed upon them is to "exceed the plan" and produce more and more. This leaves the Soviet worker no opportunity to master a craft and to reach the standard of tradesmen on similar jobs

in other countries. (ii) Owing to the policy of the authorities of building up heavy industries at all costs, the Soviet worker, in the mass, is ill-housed, ill-fed and ill-clad compared with the lowest grade worker of other countries.

It would be too much to expect Soviet workers, labouring under these conditions, to equal the standards in the outside world, either for quality or quantity. The best that can be said of the great mass of workers in U.S.S.R. industry is that they can be regarded as low-grade process workers. There are, of course, highly trained men in various industries who have completed University courses of industrial training, but who are, on entering industry, governed by red tape and Communist Party direction and interference that leave them little, if any, scope to demonstrate their ability. This is particularly noticeable when ideas they may have for the conduct of establishments conflict with what has been laid down in the plan. I have met a number of these highly trained men in Soviet industry and I believe that, if given a free hand, they would improve conditions in industry to a great degree. Unfortunately for them and the industries, a knowledge of the teachings of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin on the political aspects of life is regarded as more important than the courage to break away from set production plans. Knowing that he has only very crudely trained workers under him, a highly trained executive in industry realizes that the knowledge he has gained in an industrial university is of little account.

I recall a visit I paid to a large industrial university in the Urals. There students underwent an intensive four-year course, which included study of the teachings of Marx and Lenin. Large portions of the exterior walls of the building, erected only ten years previously, were being replaced at the time of my visit. Bricks had fallen out in large sections, leaving ugly gaps, not because of damage or war, but solely because unskilled workers had done the original construction job.

### *Children in Industry*

That the former system of training workers failed to give Soviet industry workers with even an elementary knowledge or skill is evident from decrees on 2 October 1940 by which a special department was established for calling up and training skilled workers. The decrees came into effect later in the same month. One of the A.U.C.C.T.U. Secretaries was transferred from his work in the Trade Unions and placed over this new organization of "Labour Reserves", an organization which was to give Soviet industry more than a million skilled workers per annum over training periods ranging from six months to two years.

The scheme provided for boys and girls to be trained in what are known as "F.Z.O. schools"—industrial and railway technical

schools—or in the “factory workshop” schools, attached to the plants themselves. A call-up for the Labour Reserves occurs every six months and enrolment is compulsory for all boys and girls between 14 and 17 years of age in all urban districts throughout the U.S.S.R. In rural districts every collective farm is obliged each year to send two male youths between 14 and 15 years of age for training in the F.Z.O. schools; also two youths for training in factory schools out of every 100 members of both sexes on the collective farm between 14 and 55 years of age.

In the first call-up under this scheme, of the 600,000 boys and girls enrolled no less than 310,000 came from rural districts. It is significant that for the male youths from the farms an age limit of 14 to 15 is fixed, but there is no mention of age in regard to the other two youths to be mobilized by the farms for factory schools. The fact that the laws stipulated boys and girls between 14 to 17 years does not mean that no boys or girls under 14 are permitted to work in industry.

In every undertaking I visited there were undoubtedly large numbers of boys and girls under 14 years working on all kinds of operations. I enquired the ages of the children in different factories and I was told, with only one exception, that they were fourteen years old. In the factory which was the exception (the Paris Commune shoe factory, Moscow) I found that of 2500 employees, no less than 1500 were boys between 12 and 15 years.

Apart from the Paris Commune shoe factory, I saw many small works in and about Moscow in which the majority of workers comprised children about twelve years old or younger. From my experience in the U.S.S.R., it appears beyond question that education, like every other aspect of Soviet life, has been made to suffer in the great drive to build up heavy industry. There is also no doubt in my mind that of those children who do complete the primary school course—their ages range from 7 to 11 years—all but an insignificant number go straight into Soviet industrial and commercial undertakings or to collective farms on completion of their primary school education.

The only reference that can be found in the 1940 laws that could be read as applying to children under 14 years of age is contained in one section, as follows:

Persons entering the industrial, railway technical and factory workshop schools voluntarily, will be considered mobilized and they will share all the rights and obligations as those admitted into these schools by mobilization.

The official paper of the Young Communist League, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, on 9 September 1944 made the position a little clearer when it published a lengthy article of advice for the assistance of



agitators and propagandists regarding the call-up for Labour Reserves: "Twelve and thirteen year old children are accepted in these trade schools."

In the F.Z.O. schools there is a two-year period during which these young boys and girls are to be trained as "qualified" metallurgists, chemists, miners, oil industry workers, sea and river transport workers, workers in communications, workers for railway transport, assistant engine drivers, engine and wagon mechanics, boilermakers, workers on rail transport undertakings, and so on. For those entering the factory schools there is a six-months' course of training covering coal, ore, metallurgy, building, etc. On completing this period of training, these boys and girls are considered "mobilized" and are required to remain in an undertaking for a further four years. The call up of September 1945 embraced 455,000 boys and girls, of whom 155,000 were drafted into F.Z.O. schools and the remainder (300,000) to factory schools.

According to the laws governing the training periods, inmates of the F.Z.O. schools are required to spend five hours a day in practical production and to have two hours' instruction in special branches of science. Those in factory workshop schools must work eight hours a day. The young people, when called up and enrolled, are housed in special dormitories, which, according to reports appearing in the Press from time to time, leave much to be desired in the way of cleanliness and comfort.

It is not without significance that attached to the dormitories of the F.Z.O. schools are instructors in military training and physical culture. One can see these youngsters being put through their military training practically any day of the week in the outer streets and byways of Moscow.

Such, in theory, are the basic principles governing the new scheme for training future skilled workers of Soviet industries. In actual operation the plan does not follow the lines set down in the laws governing Labour Reserves. In the first place, the Socialist Emulation bug that permeates all Soviet undertakings also comes into the training scheme for these young people. There are competitions between factories and schools to turn out children as fully qualified tradesmen before the stipulated terms are concluded. As these competitions develop, the actual training periods grow less and less. In some cases that came under my notice, I heard it claimed that optical instrument makers were being turned out, fully qualified, in three weeks.

That the competitions actually lessened the training period stipulated by the original laws will be seen from an article in *Trud* of 14 September 1944 under the heading "New Methods in the Training of Skilled Workers". It was written by the chief of the Department of the Cadres and Wage-fixing of the People's Com-

missariat for Machine Building Industries. He stated that the period for training in some trades should be extended:

There is first the question of time of the training. It is insufficient for many important trades. For example, this time is established at three months to train turners, instrument mechanics, machine-moulders, milling machinists, grinder-planers, or assembly-machines.

It is impossible to teach the new workers in such a short period to work independently as modern equipment, measuring instruments, and instrument machines are so complicated. At the same time the three months of training is a maximum under the existing rules, for some trades it is even shorter: One or two months. This time is evidently insufficient.

Judging from numerous reports in the Press subsequent to this theory on training, the article had very little, if any, effect on the practice of continuing Socialist Emulation to endeavour to shorten training periods. The fact that these boys and girls, after initial training, are bound for four years to some given undertaking, would normally result in their becoming fairly efficient, but as they are being continually pressed for greater and greater output, their chances of becoming more than low-grade process workers in any industry are almost nil.

#### *Defective Production*

The result of failure to train the workers adequately obviously must reflect itself in the economics of plants and enterprises.

This is substantiated by a report submitted to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party on 14 February 1941 and by numerous complaints from time to time in the Soviet Press about waste in, and defective goods from, industrial undertakings.

The report, submitted by one N. Voznesensky, quoted figures on losses and defective goods for 1940. He stated:

Certain branches of industry are still running at a loss, as for instance, the timber industry in 1940, where a loss of 11 or 12 roubles was incurred on every cubic metre of timber, and in the shale industry where in 1940 a loss of 33 roubles was incurred on every ton of shale quarried.

Opportunities of reducing overhead charges and production costs are literally to be found on every hand. Take spoilage. A number of plants are obviously failing to cope with the task of turning out good quality products. Losses due to spoilage at the plants of the machine building industry People's Commissariat and of the People's Commissariat of the iron and steel industry amounted in 1940 to about 2000 million roubles.

Of course that was for 1940. The new technical training did not come into operation until October 1940, so students from these training centres could not be blamed for the 1940 spoilage. Later, at the time when these students were employed in industry in thousands, an article in the *Moscow News* of 15 July 1944 refers to the success of the new training scheme:

Another plant director said that all of the 30 workers who had come to his plant from Trades School No. 29 early in the year had been promoted to team leaders and assistant foremen after four months on the job.

There are also references to faulty production and waste in 1940 still being continued throughout Soviet industrial undertakings, judging from the extracts following:

Many of the machine tools are neglected. They are rusty and dirty, they are smothered with metal shavings. They quickly get out of order. The machine tools are not repaired in accordance with the regular programme. They say that they have no time to improve the qualification of the workers as the result the defective production is increasing in scale\*.

Headed "Lost Millions", an article in *Izvestiya* of 20 April 1944 dealt with economy at the Nizkno-Tagil plant saying:

In 1943 the plant was run at a loss of 3,400,000 roubles. The head of the Martin shop talks with pride of his having to do 1200 tons above plan, but during the year it has lost hundreds of tons of steel in the form of defective production. The position has not changed in 1944. The plant is still running at a loss. Defective material is still being produced.

*Izvestiya* claimed on 24 July 1944 that the Chkalov Machine Building Plant was using 15 per cent over the required amount of steel, while faulty work in one shop alone amounted to 4.9 per cent, without taking into consideration losses incurred in small parts, of which no records are kept. During the first five months of the year the commercial price of a shipping machine tool was 37 per cent in excess of the plan. *Volzhakaye Kommuna* of 14 April 1943 claimed that during March that year in one large plant defective goods amounted to 18 to 20 per cent of production, and on some days it was as high as 30 per cent. More recently *Trud* of 19 January 1945 complained of the work in coal-mines, where it was claimed that newly received electric motors for operating water removal machinery were defective and would not work. One could quote similar Press reports from all parts of the U.S.S.R. This kind of reporting is regarded as the "self-criticism" of which one hears so much outside the U.S.S.R.

While mass production certainly does away with much of the skill formerly required in various undertakings, such production, if carried on by almost totally unskilled workers as in the U.S.S.R., operating at times the most delicate machinery, must eventually, besides lowering the quality of the product, lessen the life of the machine. Undoubtedly one of the greatest tasks for Soviet industries today is to replace the machinery used during the war. The Soviet has not, as yet, reached the stage where she can produce her own machine tools and machinery. The U.S.S.R. has in the past

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\* *Izvestiya*, 13 April 1944.



depended on machinery from Germany and other countries to fit out her large industrial undertakings. This machinery was greatly supplemented during the war from Great Britain, America, and Canada. All of it will need replacement soon, if not immediately.

Of course, the Soviet acquired large quantities of machinery as what it termed "booty" from countries she occupied, including parts of the former Japanese Empire and Manchuria. If she succeeds in getting the German technicians and scientists who were taken into the Soviet from Germany to work for her as they did for Hitler, Russia may, given time, be able to overcome this machinery difficulty now confronting her industries.

## CHAPTER XV

### SOCIAL INSURANCE

#### *Trade Union Administration*

SINCE 1933 administration of social insurance in the U.S.S.R. has been vested in the Trade Union movement. Apart from enforcement of industrial discipline and organization of Socialist Emulation among the workers, this supervision of social insurance is the principal internal work of the Trade Union movement.

The budget for social insurance is allocated by the Government through the Supreme Council and is administered by the Trade Unions. The necessary finance is raised by a direct tax on the wages bills of Soviet undertakings. This tax varies according to the industry or undertaking and ranges from ten per cent to as high as seventeen per cent. Benefits from social insurance are received by workers at no direct cost to themselves, but, since it is paid for by industry and undertakings it follows that it is embodied in the cost of production, and the worker pays either through not participating directly in the extra wage that would be otherwise available for distribution or by paying higher prices for production commodities.

When considering benefits to Soviet workers through social insurance, it should be remembered that the great majority of workers in the U.S.S.R. do not come under its provisions—namely those engaged in collective farm networks. Most writers on social insurance appear to take what applies to workers in urban areas as covering all citizens, whereas the peasantry certainly do not enjoy the same privileges as their comrades in urban areas, and are outside the ambit of the Social Insurance scheme.

Laws governing social insurance are varied from time to time by amendment or by substitution of new laws. Such amendments or substitutions are made by the Council of People's Commissars, in conjunction with the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. and the Secretariat of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (A.U.C.C.T.U.). The wording of the preamble to the existing laws is of interest: "On the measures of regulating

labour discipline, improvement of practical Government social insurance and the struggle with the abuse of it."

These laws were made on 28 December 1938 by special decree of the three bodies and it is no accident that they give pride of place to the words "regulating labour discipline", for every possible device is used by the authorities to enforce industrial discipline on workers. It is through the ramifications of this social insurance scheme that the only tangible benefits to a worker and his family in the U.S.S.R. are to be found. Therefore, the scheme can be, and undoubtedly is, a big factor in the enforcement of industrial discipline. Were it not for the benefits that might accrue to himself and his family through this scheme, there would be no point, or value, in a worker's joining a Soviet Trade Union. Non-unionists (and there are many of them) under this scheme receive only 50 per cent of the amount payable to a member of a Trade Union for accident or illness.

### *Principles of Benefits*

The scheme covers an extensive field, such as subsidies for temporary disablement, pregnancy, and childbirth, burials, care of newborn infants, nursing and individual subsidies to parents, pensions for working pensioners, pensions for non-working pensioners, crèches and kindergartens for children under school age, establishment, maintenance and equipment of Pioneer Camps, establishment and maintenance of rest homes and sanatoria, maintenance of hospitals in rest homes and sanatoria of the Trade Unions, supply of physical culture equipment, organization of subsidiary farms, supply of dietetic food, inspection and establishment of scientific institutes for labour protection (factory safety regulations), and supply of baby outfits to mothers of newborn children.

Many supporters of the present regime claim that any calculation of living conditions of Soviet workers cannot be complete without including the benefits arising from this social insurance scheme. While not wishing to detract from the value of the scheme, which is undoubtedly a great advancement over anything in the Tsarist regime, it should be realized that the benefits are not as great, nor the scope of the scheme as wide, as is generally pictured.

As mentioned earlier, the scheme has very definite limitations, since it does not cover the peasantry. The total amount of the social insurance budget for 1944 averaged an expenditure of less than two hundred and ninety-four roubles per head of those covered by the scheme.

Generally speaking, compensation for illness or temporary incapacity is made on the following basis:



## SOCIAL INSURANCE PAYMENTS

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percentage of Wage Rates</i>
1. Those with above 6 years continuous service in one undertaking	100
2. Those with over 3 years but not more than 6 years continuous employment in the one undertaking	80
3. Those with from 2 to 3 years continuous employment in one undertaking	60
4. Those with less than 2 years continuous employment in the one undertaking	50
5. Juveniles below 18 years of age with over 2 years continuous employment in the one undertaking	80
6. Juveniles below 18 years of age with less than 2 years continuous employment in one undertaking	60

A non-unionist falling in groups 1-4 would be paid only 50 per cent of the set rate, and groups 5 and 6 provide only for members of Trade Unions. While it is possible that some provision has been made to cover non-unionists within those two groups I have been unable to trace it.

Special provision is made for workers in coal-mines, by which a man on coal extraction, or on preparatory work in the pit with more than two years' continuous employment in the same pit will receive 100 per cent of his wage. Miners with less than two years' continuous employment are entitled to 60 per cent of their wages.

For the purpose of continuous service, a transfer from one job to another, if made officially, will not break the continuity of employment.

If a worker's incapacity is due to illness contracted in the course of his employment (occupational diseases) or from injury contracted while at his work, relief is paid according to the worker's category until he is certified fit to resume work, or he is recorded as being totally incapacitated, in which case he would then be outside the ambit of the scheme and would have to qualify for a State pension.

In the case of ordinary sickness, payment of benefit is limited to 75 days, but the Factory Trade Union Committee has the right to extend the period. There does not appear to be any limitation of the extension which a Factory Committee may grant, but it may not authorize payment in excess of 35 roubles monthly in such cases.

Every effort is made in the U.S.S.R. to make invalids and old age pensioners do some work. Should such a person fall ill while working, he or she is entitled to relief payments from the social insurance fund. So are other workers, but the period of payment is limited

to not more than two consecutive months, or three months in any one year.

Invalid pensioners are allowed to earn a certain amount of money by accepting work (generally part-time work in co-operatives) without prejudicing their pensions. Old age pensioners are not limited as to the money they can earn without loss of pension.

Another interesting feature of the social insurance legislation is its application to a person, who, having committed some misdemeanour, has been sentenced to a term of "correctional labour". The person is confined in prison barracks and is marched, under armed guard, to and from his place of employment each day. Generally speaking, he is employed at his usual work, but with a 25 per cent reduction in salary. Under the social insurance legislation such a person, although probably working at the same job in the same place of employment while serving his term, will have his continuity of employment broken for the purposes of payment of social insurance benefits, and will have to recommence building up a new continuity of employment at the expiration of his term.

Provisions exist which empower fund administrators to reduce, or refuse, payment of benefits to those guilty of breaches of industrial discipline. A worker who arbitrarily leaves his place of employment, or who has been dismissed for some breach of industrial discipline, forfeits his rights to social insurance payments and must start his job without any service to his credit for social insurance benefits.

The time-limit for making application for benefits is generous. A person can claim his benefit payments up to six months after recovery, or in the case of his death, his immediate relatives can, within six months, claim all relief payments due to the deceased up to the time of his death.

When a member of a family is ill and requires the services of a nurse, the person doing the nursing is entitled to social insurance relief payment, as is also a mother who remains at home to care for a sick child under the age of two years. Payment to a mother whose sick child is more than two years old is not specified. No doubt the insurance authorities would expect the child to enter hospital.

#### *Pensions on a Class Basis*

Payments to aged and totally incapacitated persons who qualify for pensions are made through social insurance bodies, but these people come under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat for Social Welfare and benefits paid as pensions are from State funds. Those certified as totally incapacitated, as the result of disease or injury contracted in the course of employment, are classified by the pension-paying authorities as "Invalids of Labour 1st class" or "Invalids of Labour 2nd class". These pensioners

receive payments additional to the base pension for all other invalids.

Additional payments are made according to different categories. While the basic division of these invalids is set out in the two classes of "Invalids of Labour", when it comes to payment of additional pensions the classes are further divided and extra benefits paid accordingly with regard to the period of continuous employment with one undertaking, as follows:

#### PAYMENT OF EXTRA BENEFITS

<i>Category</i>	<i>Period of Employment</i>	<i>Additional Payment Per Cent</i>
1. Workers and employees engaged underground on all harmful work	From 3 to 5 years	10
	From 5 to 10 years	20
	More than 10 years	25
2. Workers and employees of the metallurgical machinery construction, electrical, coal mining, basic chemistry, rubber industry, railway and water transport and production undertakings	From 4 to 8 years	10
	From 8 to 12 years	15
	More than 12 years	20
3. All other workers and employees	From 5 to 10 years	10
	From 10 to 15 years	15
	More than 15 years	20

Invalid pensions are paid for mutilation or other injuries during the course of employment, or for occupational diseases. They are also paid where the invalidity occurs before the age of 20 years. In all other cases qualification for a pension according to age and length of continuous service is as under:

#### GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR PENSIONS

<i>Age</i>	<i>Length of Continuous Work</i>		<i>Underground or Harmful Work (Years)</i>
	<i>Male (Years)</i>	<i>Female (Years)</i>	
From 20 to 22 years	3	2	2
from 22 to 25 years	4	3	3
from 25 to 30 years	6	4	4
from 30 to 35 years	8	5	4
from 35 to 40 years	10	7	6
from 40 to 45 years	12	9	7
from 45 to 50 years	14	11	8
from 50 to 55 years	16	13	10
from 55 to 60 years	18	14	12
Over 60 years	20	15	14



It will be readily seen, therefore, that there must be fairly large numbers of people in the U.S.S.R. who have been rendered totally incapacitated in industry, either through accident or occupational diseases, but, who, because of lack of the required continuity of employment, are debarred from social insurance benefits or invalid pensions. It is possible, however, for a person over sixty years with an insufficient record of employment for the old age pension to qualify for an invalid pension.

Invalid pensions to which the additional sums or percentages (shown above) are to be added, and which are payable to those who qualify according to the above table, are based on categories, ages, and periods of continuous service, and range from 23½ per cent to 100 per cent of the former salary. People who qualify for the old age pension, by 25 years of continuous employment in the case of men and 20 years in the case of women, receive base pensions from 50 to 60 per cent of their former salary. In the absence of statistics, it is not possible to obtain full particulars of the number of people in receipt of old age pensions. It is, however, generally accepted by those who know the U.S.S.R. well that the number is very limited owing to the qualifying service period.

The latest decree affecting invalid and old age pensions recognized the inadequacy of existing pensions and took steps to bring them up to date. This decree stated:

In consideration of the fact that, in the general high level of personal guarantee in the Soviet Union, there are pensioners who have gone on the pension many years ago, when the norms were considerably lower than that of the present moment, pensions on the Government social insurance, irrespective of the time of fixing, must be not less than the following amounts per month, counting the additional sums:

<i>Category of Pensioner</i>	<i>Not Having Incapacitated Members of the Family</i>	<i>Having One Incapacitated Member of the Family</i>	<i>Having one or more Incapacitated Member of the Family</i>
	<i>Roubles</i>	<i>Roubles</i>	<i>Roubles</i>
Pensioners receiving pensions on old age or for long service invalids of the 1st class	50	60	75
Invalids of the 2nd class	40	50	60
Families which have lost their supporters		30	40

For invalids of the 3rd class pensions on the Government social insurance should not be less than 25 roubles per month.

It is interesting to note at this stage the pensions paid to relatives of deceased persons of high social standing in the U.S.S.R. On the death of Shcherbakov (a prominent member of the Politbureau) his wife received a grant of 200,000 roubles and a monthly pension of 2000 roubles for life; his mother received a lump sum of 50,000 roubles and a pension of 700 roubles per month for life; each of his three sons received 1000 roubles per month until completion of their education, and his sister received a pension of 300 roubles per month for life. On the death of Marshal Shaposhnikov his widow received a lump sum payment of 200,000 roubles and a pension of 5000 roubles a month (the equivalent of the late Marshal's salary) for life. When General Berzarin died, his family received 100,000 roubles. In addition the widow received a monthly pension of 2000 roubles for life, and each of his two daughters 1000 roubles per month until completion of their education.

These are a few of the pensions in the higher strata of Soviet society. They contrast sharply with pensions for the common people. It should be remembered that the wife and children of a worker who dies from injury or illness arising out of his employment do not receive grant or pension, nor do widows and children of Red Army privates killed in action.

#### *Limitations of Rest Homes*

Accommodation in rest homes has never been adequate nor is it likely to be for some years to come, although Kuznetsov (President of the A.U.C.C.T.U.) said early in 1946 that by 1947 Trade Unions hoped to have attendance in rest homes and sanatoria up to the highest pre-war levels.

The pre-war attendance at its peak totalled two and a half million. If figures of membership of the Soviet Trade Unions given by Soviet delegates to the World Trade Union Conference (27,000,000) are correct, it is obvious that the Soviet has a long way to go before it can claim that *all* workers are entitled to enter rest homes and sanatoria. As a matter of fact, entrance to such places is used by the Soviet Trade Unions as a means of enforcing industrial discipline and producing a greater volume of work. The benefits of rest homes and sanatoria do not apply to the peasantry.

One of the first hurdles a Soviet worker must negotiate for a pass to a rest home or sanatorium is continuous service. To be eligible to enter a rest home the worker must have had two years' continuous employment. This is not the only qualification needed. Preference is given in the first instance (in theory mainly) to the families of Red Army warriors. Next come the Stakhanovites and their families, followed by "Best Workers", "Good Workers" and so

on, down through the grades. In addition, there are the prominent Trade Union and Communist Party officials and their families to be considered. If a person has no outstanding production figures to recommend him, his or her chance of gaining admittance to a rest home or sanatorium is slight, irrespective of length of service. Non-unionists' chances of entry to these places are nil.

A rest home is sometimes attached to a factory or plant and selected workers go there daily after completion of shifts. One home that I visited is within a few hundred yards of a plant. It is an old two-story building on the shore of a large lake. On the second floor was the men's dormitory with approximately fifty beds arranged in rows and about three feet apart, with approximately five feet between the rows. A small metal container releasing a little water for washing was the only water service of the rest home. This particular place was situated in one of the largest cities, but the method of providing washing water was of the primitive type more usual among the peasantry. In all, accommodation was provided for 100 workers of both sexes from the plant, and the director said they were all allowed fourteen days a year at the home. Since there were 4400 workers at the plant and the home could accommodate only 100, this would mean that a two-shift rest period would have to be arranged each day through the year for the workers.

There was a charge of 150 roubles for the use of this rest home. While it was very clean, and very close to the factory, the fact that workers preferred the home to their own homes between shifts appeared to me more of a reflection on ordinary housing conditions than an indication of social advancement.

Establishment of night sanatoria attached to factories for workers suffering from illness requiring medical attention is another aspect of Soviet Social Insurance work. The object is to give sick workers proper medical care and special foods while they continue their usual occupations, attending the sanatoria for treatment between shifts.

One such place to accommodate 80 workers has been established at the Molotov Automobile works at Gorky. The cost of maintaining a patient is 446 roubles per month, of which the worker patient pays 33 per cent. The cost is divided as follows: 330 roubles for food, 7 roubles for medicine, 5 roubles for cultural service. The balance (104 roubles) goes towards payment of attendants' salaries and administration.

This sanatorium is staffed with a doctor, four nurses, and nine servants, and the worker patients are accommodated in wards holding four to sixteen patients. To gain admittance the worker must be passed for treatment by a special commission, consisting of the chief physician of the factory clinic, the doctor in charge of the tuber-



culosis section and a representative of the Trade Union Factory Committee. Given equal health conditions, the Best Workers have priority. The term of treatment is two months. It would appear that this particular sanatorium specializes in tuberculosis cases and there are special apparatus and methods of treatment for this complaint.

The irony of this worthy project is the Trade Union attitude towards the patients treated there. The Unions point to the fact that after treatment in this sanatorium, the workers' labour efficiency is increased. They quote how one such worker, before his stay in the sanatorium, fulfilled his norm by 120 per cent, and how, after treatment, he fulfilled his norm up to 2 norms per shift; another worker increased his labour efficiency 50 per cent as the result of a stay at the sanatorium.

So proud are Soviet Trade Union officials of accomplishments in this field of production that one is forced to the conclusion that they are concerned not so much with relief of suffering as with increase of labour productivity. The institution does, however, appear to be fulfilling a long-felt want in the U.S.S.R., for the ordinary living conditions of workers are such that two months' stay in this sanatorium must be of great benefit.

#### *Private Insurance*

Although it is not commonly known outside the U.S.S.R., the Government conducts its own insurance department. Citizens may take out life insurance policies much as is done with private insurance companies in other countries.

Under this scheme, policies may be drawn for any sum not less than 5000 roubles for periods of 10, 15, or 20 years or until reaching the ages of 50, 55, 60, and 75.

The amount of insurance is paid (a) on reaching the age limit provided in the policy, (b) in case of permanent bodily disablement in consequence of accident, or (c) in case of the death of the insured person. In the event of death, the insurance is paid to the next-of-kin.

## CHAPTER XVI

### SOVIET HOUSING

#### *Plans and Propaganda*

THERE is probably no aspect of Soviet life more grossly misrepresented by clever propaganda outside the U.S.S.R. than that of housing conditions. I know the slum areas of both Sydney and Melbourne fairly well and regard these areas as blots on the Australian way of life, but, bad as they are, housing conditions in Australian slum areas are infinitely superior to the general housing conditions of the great masses in the Soviet Union.

There was widespread shortage of housing throughout the U.S.S.R. before the war, and the devastation of large areas by the Nazis aggravated what was already a deplorable housing situation. But it was not to Moscow that evacuees from areas overrun by the Germans were sent. Most of them went deep into the Urals and other distant parts where industries had been started. The incredibly poor state of housing in Moscow, Baku and Leningrad proper, however, cannot be attributed solely to wartime conditions.

Moscow housing is probably the best in Russia. It is certainly better than in Leningrad or Baku, two other large cities I have seen. Although large scale construction of workers' flats has taken place in Moscow over a period of years, the accommodation in these new buildings provides for only a small percentage of the population.

Photographs of large blocks of workers' flats, distributed by various Societies for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R. and Communist Party organizations of other countries, are, generally speaking, legitimate photographs, but they give foreign readers an entirely erroneous impression. In some cases this photographic evidence of advancement made by Soviet workers is only a reproduction of plans which have not yet been effected. They represent nothing more than an architect's drawings made into picture form.

I recall some years ago seeing a beautiful picture of the new Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, presented in a manner that led me to believe it actually existed. This structure, with its enormous statue of Lenin on top, was portrayed as the most modern piece of architectural work in the world. On arrival in Moscow I looked

for this wonderful building in vain, and heard with surprise that there had never been such a building in Moscow. The explanation was that the architects drew the plan for it, and construction began on a site formerly occupied by a church, which had been blown up to make way for the building. When the construction was under way it was discovered that the foundations were not solid, and that the building was sinking. It was then pulled down, a new and stronger foundation was laid, and work was once again started on the building. With the outbreak of war against Germany, the small portion of the building that had been erected was demolished and the steel from the building used for war purposes. As I left Moscow in February of 1946 the construction of this Palace of the Soviets was once again beginning.

Another case worth quoting is that of the public baths at Ust-Laminsk. The decision to build them was made in 1925, and they were to be on an elaborate scale, incorporating a full mechanized laundry in which the bathers could have their clothes cleaned while they were in the baths. On the site stood a mill which had to be demolished without delay. A month later the authorities had another idea—the erection of a giant model crèche, complete with milk conveyor and a Punch and Judy show. Nothing more was heard of the crèche or the public baths until 1934, when it was decided to proceed with the public baths, having large shower baths instead of the laundry. What remained of the mill was thereupon demolished and the foundations of the baths were begun. A special commission of architects came to the town with lavish plans. The local papers proclaimed the building as a “giant of hygiene”. A special cinema unit with producers, consultants and a large number of workers came to film the project. Building arrangements proceeded apace. It was decided to provide entertainment at the baths in the form of a song and dance ensemble, to appear in the hall, where a stage would be erected. It was also decided to erect near the baths a special combine to produce tubs and to send a special expedition to Central Asia for birch twigs.

In 1938—four years later—the whole plan was dropped. It was thought that the building of a stadium would stimulate physical culture and be more pleasing to the eye. A resolution was passed to break up the walls of the baths and use the bricks for building the stadium. This resolution was duly given effect.

In 1943 the suggestion for building the baths again came up. This time it was decided to build them on an even larger scale than originally proposed and the site was extended by the demolition of six shops and four warehouses. From then to October 1945 nothing further had been done about construction of the public baths at Ust-Laminsk.

The foregoing story of the bath house was published in *Izvestiya*



on 23 October 1945. While no doubt it sounds unreal to anyone who has not lived in the U.S.S.R., it is completely credible to one who has lived there.

### *Jerry-Building*

Construction of new housing for Moscow has been planned and discussed repeatedly since 1931. The new houses that have been erected are now, almost without exception, sadly in need of repairs and renovations. Visitors to Moscow frequently mistake old buildings of Tsarist days for evidences of advancement in Soviet housing and culture.

Apart from administrative buildings, there has been very little, if any, attempt made since the Revolution to keep Moscow buildings in repair or reasonably well cared for. What has been done is so crude that it is almost a waste of time. Repairs, renovations and even new constructions are mainly done with unskilled labour using primitive tools and methods and hurried along by Stakhanovites on the job.

In almost any new construction job one finds loose bricks and façades falling off even before completion of the building. The life of downpipes in modern buildings is very short indeed. If they do not completely crumble away they are so far gone after a couple of winters that they have to be removed to protect pedestrians. In early spring, when the thaw sets in, bricks and large pieces of façades fall to the pavement, as water from the melting ice and snow penetrates behind them. Not once but many times while walking through Moscow streets at this time of the year I have narrowly escaped being struck by falling masonry. Such happenings do not seem to affect passing Soviet citizens who nonchalantly walk along as though such incidents were part of everyday life. Owing to the system of street cleaning operating in Moscow, the fallen masonry is removed almost immediately by the street cleaner attached to the building.

Under lease conditions of the housing administration, tenants are required to keep footpaths and up to the centre of the roadway in front of their buildings free from all dirt. Thoroughfares are hosed once a day during the summer and in winter all snow and ice must be cleared from the street frontages. This is generally done by women. In summer the work could not be regarded as laborious, but the same cannot be said of the long winter months when snow falls heavily almost every night and forms into ice, inches deep, within a few hours. Despite the long hours of labour by the *dvorniks* (street cleaners and general usefals) the ice remains on the roads and footpaths whenever snow is falling.

It was not until the spring of 1944 that I discovered that streets which I had daily traversed and thought to be well laid were the

old cobblestone roads of Tsarist days. In fact, most Moscow streets are made of cobblestones. Only the principal thoroughfares in the centre of the city and a few heavy traffic routes out of the city are asphalted. The Red Square is almost entirely paved with cobblestones.

The *dvorniks* are out in all weathers during the long winter which, in Moscow, runs from November to the end of April. One sees these workers in thousands on the streets from daylight until the early hours of the next morning endeavouring to clear away the ice and snow. Their only implements are crowbars, chippers made from thin steel about 4 inches by 2 inches attached to a handle like a hoe, and bundles of birch twigs tied to sticks of wood. These *dvorniks* are poorly paid and are regarded as the lower classes even by other Soviet workers, who are frequently heard saying contemptuously, "She is only a *dvornik*".

In Moscow's principal streets the snow is either swept up and carried to the middle of the road to be picked up by lorries and carted away, or dumped into a sewerage manhole if one is near. In other parts of the city the snow is swept up, shovelled into wooden boxes and pulled into courtyards to await the spring thaw. In the back streets of Moscow very little effort is made to keep snow and ice from the roads and footpaths, and when it thaws these areas are extremely sloppy and dirty.

At the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., held in Moscow during June 1931, L. M. Kaganovich delivered a lengthy report on what he called the reconstruction of Moscow and other cities. The object of this report, which after its adoption by that Committee became part of the Second Five Year Plan, was to lay down the scheme for both reconstruction and new housing.

As far as Moscow is concerned, while there has been some widening of streets, little else has been done about reconstruction. Any person who has not visited Moscow since before the Revolution would find very little difference in the city's layout. The principal alterations include the widening of Gorky Street and the outer boulevard (*Sadovaya*), a job about three-quarters completed. It would appear that instead of relieving the housing shortage in Moscow the scheme considerably aggravated it by the demolitions necessary for widening certain streets.

The jerry-building in Soviet housing to which I have referred, and the deplorable state of repair of existing accommodation, were also evident when Kaganovich made his report, of which the following is an extract:

Take the new houses in Dubrovsky suburb. An investigation undertaken by the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* revealed that the houses were slowly but surely falling to pieces. The Trust administered documents but not the houses. The house manager was inactive.

As an illustration of the official conception of workers' housing requirements, Kaganovich demonstrated how workers under the present regime were better off than in Tsarist days. One case he quotes: "He now lives in a room in a newly constructed house. With him live two daughters." Quoting another case, where a family of seven had moved into better apartments, Kaganovich says they now occupy two rooms, with a floor space of  $24\frac{1}{2}$  square metres. This would be approximately 18 feet by 15 feet for the needs of all seven people.

Kaganovich quoted an example of how housing conditions could be improved:

Here is another favourable example: The house on Spasoolvanevsky Pereulsk No. 10. The workers of the Moselchtrika plant restored it and for two years paid double rent in order to start central heating and instal gas . . . all current repairs are done by the tenants at their own expense.

Later in his report Kaganovich describes some newly constructed houses, saying:

The quality of the houses is obviously unsatisfactory. You enter the apartment of a worker and you immediately perceive a number of defects in construction. "Formerly," says the worker, "we lived badly in a barrack building or a cellar. Now we are incomparably better off. You see, we have two rooms. But look, the floor has cracked, the chimney smokes, the toilets do not flush with the result that there is a bad smell in the apartment. The doors have warped, and so on."

All through his speech Kaganovich quotes housing conditions in Austria or Germany and conditions under the Tsar to show that, bad as they were, the conditions in the U.S.S.R. today were better. Having an audience of fellow politicians, he did not risk making such statements for public consumption; but from his report one learns that the plan for the following year was to build dwellings at a cost of 80,000,000 roubles which he estimated would give 400 houses with a "general living area of 530,000 square metres, approximately sufficient for 100,000 people".

### *Congested Living Space*

Taking Kaganovich's figures for living space and the number of people to occupy it, his plan boils down to an average of approximately 9 feet 9 inches by 6 feet 6 inches per person.

A little later, in regard to house construction methods, one finds in the report of I. Boitzov, Secretary of the Kalinin Provincial Committee of the Communist Party, delivered in December 1943, the following reference:

In September and October the Party organization got about 12,000 people formed into 1845 brigades, to take part in house building. The house



building plan was fulfilled by November 7th. 18,306 houses have been restored or built, housing over 63,000 people.

This is the way we organized house building. After discussing the Government ordinance at a conference of the active members of the provincial committee, sections and chiefs of sections were sent to the various districts where programmes of work had been drawn up under their guidance. These representatives remained in the districts until the end of the building work. Competition was widely organized and widely advertised. The speed of the building work was determined by mutual help and good administration. The collective farms of the eastern districts sent building workers and drivers with horses to help the work, 2852 builders bringing their own food and tools arrived at the beginning of September, also 1547 carters with horses, most of them volunteered to come.

It will be noticed that Boitzov makes no reference to the type of housing constructed, but the answer is found in the discussion of the budget early in the following year, when the Commissar for the building materials industry, L. A. Sosnin, said:

As regards collective farm buildings, it is noticeable that in districts which abound in timber houses are rapidly restored, as for instance in Kalinin, Smelensk and Orel Oblasts. The collective farmers get the timber free of cost in unlimited quantities, but they are experiencing difficulties in sawing it, and newly built houses frequently have no wooden floors, while round logs are used wherever boards are necessary. In order to make things easier for the rural populations our industry must produce consignments of sawing frames, which driven by tractor, can saw 25-30 cubic metres of boards per day. By moving this frame from one farm to another it will be easy to saw enough timber to meet the requirements of the farms for the whole rayon.

These village houses are cottages, usually of one large room, built entirely from timber in its raw state. The only tools used in construction are a small short-handled axe and an old-fashioned band saw. One seldom sees any other tools used by Soviet workmen, although they become very clever with these primitive implements. The accommodation to which Boitzov refers, according to his figures, would house 63,000 people, or an average of 3.43 persons per cottage. From my experience, I believe that these cottages would contain only one small room. While the cottages of the peasantry are not nearly as crowded as city apartment houses, they rarely have more than two rooms for a much larger number of people than Boitzov mentioned.

In most of the large new buildings for workers in Moscow holes have been made in the walls or windows through which the occupant directs the piping from his small heating stove. This method of self-heating is essential for all who can afford to buy a small stove. While most of these places are equipped with central heating, faulty methods of construction and fitting make it almost a full-time job to keep them in repair. Also, one is never sure in the U.S.S.R. when a Socialist competition to save fuel for heating

or lighting is to take place. Once such a competition starts, all heating will be cut off for days while electric lighting will be off completely for hours. These competitions, organized district by district, generally take place just before a national day, or some important event, and are regarded as evidence of devotion to the State. Strange to say, while electricity is from time to time cut off to save current, radio is not affected. One can listen to it at all times, even while sitting in the dark.

For those apartment houses not subject to central heating—and there are quite a number in Moscow—wood is brought to central points in the city and sold to people on the spot, the right to purchase being granted by the Trade Unions. It is the job of the buyer to get the wood home. It is generally pulled home on a roughly made wooden sleigh. The wood is then chopped in the doorways or passage-ways of the apartment houses and naturally the steps and corridors of the entrance are damaged in the process.

People who cannot obtain approval from the Trade Unions or local authorities to purchase wood for the winter have to pay fantastic prices for very small bundles at the open markets, or go without. This is nothing new to city dwellers. One continually reads of the failure of some organization or other to supply needs in this regard. I personally know of Soviet families having to suffer cold rooms without any semblance of heating all through the winter, owing to local and Trade Union authorities refusing to grant them permission to purchase wood.

While Soviet housing authorities claimed to have added four million square metres of living space to Moscow during the ten years preceding 1936, they still fell short of requirements by no less than 46 million square metres. Even with the extra four million square metres, accommodation for average living space fell from 7 square metres per person in 1918 to approximately  $4\frac{1}{2}$  square metres in 1936. At this time the recognized objective standard of living space was 8.25 square metres per head, but the standard was, like many others in the Soviet, something for which to strive rather than an accomplished fact.

### *Fixation of Rentals*

So far as present day Moscow is concerned, large numbers of its inhabitants live in corridors, passage-ways, kitchens and bathrooms. To assess rentals, these corridors, passage-ways, kitchens and bathrooms are not counted as living space. The rent is based upon so much per square metre occupied by the tenant. The rent per square metre may differ in districts, apartment houses, and Republics. Rents are based on normal economic principles whereby a return is made sufficient to cover all necessary repairs and renovations, as well as amortization.

The rent also differs according to the conveniences in the apartment house. If it is fitted with running water, plumbing, and electricity, it costs more per square metre than a house without these amenities. In a house not fitted with lavatories, there is a reduction of 10 per cent in rentals; in a house without running water and lavatories, the reduction is 20 per cent. If the place has running water and lavatories but is not fitted with electricity, a reduction of five per cent is allowed; and when a house has no running water, lavatories, or electricity, the reduction is 25 per cent.

Another factor in the determination of rentals is the condition of the building and room space rented. For a semi-dark room there is a reduction of 50 per cent in the standard rate; for a completely dark room, a 75 per cent reduction; for rooms in basements reductions range from five per cent to 20 per cent; for rooms that have been certified by the responsible authority as "damp" there is a drop of 20 per cent; for rooms through which other people have to pass in going to and from their rooms, there is a 30 per cent reduction; for rooms above the fourth floor not served with lifts the reduction is 50 per cent. All these reductions are made against the standard rent rate per square metre set for the particular building by the local housing authorities.

Many Soviet workers are housed in apartments or barracks attached to the industrial undertakings where they are employed. While these people also pay rent for space on similar principles, their continued occupancy depends entirely on continued employment. The undertaking has the housing under its administrative control. Likewise, the workers' chances of improving their living quarters depends on the management of the plant. As housing space is a most important part of a Soviet citizen's life, living quarters for workers attached to a plant make for additional economic power over such workers.

Moscow city has a population of approximately five million. A large percentage of these people live in apartment houses beyond the outer city circle of Sadovaya, in what could rightly be regarded as industrial suburbs. Living accommodation beyond this outer circle is devoid of water and sanitary conveniences. Residents are required to draw water for domestic or other use from pumps situated at intervals along the streets. The only sanitary accommodation in most of these places consists of shacks in the courtyards. Sewerage is not laid to these shacks—many of which consist of sides only—so it is not hard to imagine the unpleasantness. This is another paradox in the authorities' conception of culture. For from the crude shacks that serve as lavatories can be seen the Red Army Theatre. This is a tremendous structure built on a huge marble block foundation in the form of a star. Standing as a beacon of Soviet culture, it is a very good piece of architecture, as also



are the new housing buildings. Construction of the Theatre must have cost many millions of roubles; yet living conditions in the surrounding districts are, apart from the overcrowding, most deplorable.

To live in an apartment house with its own bathroom is a novelty. Most of the older apartment houses of Tsarist days made no provision whatever for bathing, nor do many of the new structures of the present regime. I inspected one block of new workers' flats just before completion. These had been much publicized in early 1944. There were three flats each consisting of three rooms and a kitchen; two flats each consisting of two rooms and a kitchen; and one flat consisting of one room. There was a sewerage system in each of the flats, but nowhere in the building was there provision for bathing. In fact, except for the lavatories, there was no water laid on. Tenants of these modern flats in need of a bath would have to attend public baths. As for washing clothes, there was not the faintest sign of laundry facilities.

In his report to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party on the Third Five Year Plan in March 1939, Molotov, reviewing the successes of the Second Five Year Plan, said: "A total of 26,800,000 square metres of new housing space was thrown open to occupancy. It must be admitted that in this regard the Second Five Year Plan fell short of fulfilment by a considerable margin." Later, in his report on proposals for the Third Five Year Plan in regard to housing, he said:

With the object of remedying the housing shortage, building operations in cities and industrial hamlets will be intensified. During the period of the Third Five Year Plan, 35,000,000 square metres of new housing space will be made available for occupation. In addition, it is estimated that private individuals building their own homes will add another 10,000,000 square metres of housing space. We must see to it that the plan is carried out without fail. I must mention here an innovation introduced by the Moscow Soviet. On the initiative of architect Mordvinov, the Moscow Soviet has adopted a special plan of housing construction, over and above its regular plan, providing for the building of 23 houses with a total of 1610 apartments in the course of this year. These houses will be built by the express method and with the wide use of standard building parts which is something to be highly encouraged. The experience gained from this experiment in Moscow should be applied to other cities.

The plan for city development contemplates a considerable extension of operations for the improvement of urban and industrial centres. It provides for the installation of water supply systems in 50 towns, sewerage systems in 45 towns and street car services in 8 towns. There must be considerable improvement in the building of new public baths, a matter which has been unardonably neglected. In the cities there must be real improvement in gas supply, and the practice of hauling huge amounts of wood fuel to the principal cities, which is an obnoxious survival of the past, must be positively reduced to a minimum and subsequently abandoned entirely.

The importance of housing in the U.S.S.R. can be judged from

the fact that, in Molotov's speech of approximately 40,000 words, the foregoing were the only references to housing. It will also be seen that the housing scheme of the Second Five Year Plan period fell short of accomplishment with only a passing reference by Molotov, while the projected plan for the next Five Years (1939-44) was for a total of 45 million square metres, including the 10 million square metres estimated from private building. During all my experiences in Soviet building construction, the only methods I saw which might be regarded as "express" were (a) the placing of too many workers on the job, and (b) the use of standard sizes in steel girders, window sashes and frames.

In fact, compared with Australian systems, the methods used in all housing construction I witnessed could be regarded as little better than primitive. The workers on the job convey bricks and mortar to the bricklayers on roughly constructed wooden trays; not once did I see a spirit level used on a Soviet job. On one new construction job I drew the attention of the man in charge to the bad alignment of the house and inquired the reason for it. He explained that it was due to the fact that there were no iron girders to guide them on alignments.

Individual housing, mentioned in Molotov's report of 1939, is now being pushed forward again by the Soviet Trade Unions with great vigour but with apparently not such great success. This system of having the workers build their own homes must not be understood in the same sense as "having a home built" in another country. In the U.S.S.R. the building of one's home means what it says. The worker and his mates, if he can get them to assist him, must do all the work in their spare time in the construction of the home. The advance made to him (10,000 roubles), is regarded as a loan to be repaid in seven years and is for the purchase of timber and other materials.

In some of the larger industrial plants the Party and Trade Unions are attempting to organize workers desiring to build their own homes into brigades for that purpose. In practically all cases these individual homes would be built by unskilled labour, and while this would no doubt be a considerable improvement on existing housing accommodation it still leaves much to be desired.

Establishment of new industries in distant parts of the U.S.S.R., which has gone on since the start of the First Five Year Plan in 1928, always brings with it the question of housing. Once it is decided to erect a plant, establish an industry, or start an undertaking, the first thing done is to transfer the necessary number of workers to the area to carry out the contemplated project. The matter of providing housing for these workers has always been a secondary consideration. I have seen people living in the ground on the outskirts of towns on the railway lines which lead to the Urals.

I have also seen homeless Soviet citizens living in holes in the ground while they worked at the job of clearing up debris in an old monastery the State claimed it was going to restore. Of course, what was intended to impress visitors here was the State's concern for the church which had been "wantonly destroyed by the Germans".

### *Self-Criticism*

The condition of housing in the U.S.S.R. can best be understood by scrutinizing the criticisms appearing in the Soviet Press of the lack of proper repairs, faulty construction, etc. This is known as "self-criticism" and is always directed against an individual, an administrative body, a Trade Union, or the workers themselves, for not carrying out the obligations demanded by the State. This is a most convenient way for the State to side-step its obligation of providing decent housing conditions for its citizens.

At the Thirteenth Plenum of the A.U.C.C.T.U., held on 28 March 1945, I. V. Rossadin, chairman of the Central Committee of the Union of Workers in Dwelling Economy, took part in the discussion on workers' living conditions. He said that at 1 January 1944 in the R.S.F.S.R. alone there existed 2,437,215 structures with living space of 130,829,000 square metres. He added:\*

The poor working of central heating in certain cases is due to the indifference of house administration and furnace operators and also to the bad state of repair of buildings, particularly roofs; of 47 million square metres of iron roofs, 30 million square metres require capital repairs.

V. S. Byshkov, Vice-Commissar of Ferrous Metallurgy of the U.S.S.R., stated at the same session that of a total area of 96,000 square metres of living space which should have been built for the ferrous metallurgy industry by the industry of the Commissariat of Construction, only 44,000 square metres were actually constructed.†

On the same matter, P. D. Efanov, chairman of the Plant Committee at the Magnitorgorsk Combine, stated: "While the population of Magnitorgorsk has increased by 50 per cent during the war, dwelling space has grown by only 8.5 per cent.‡

The *Manual for the Guidance of Factory and Local Committees*, no. 3, 1945, headed: "It is the duty of Trade Unions to take care of the workers' housing conditions", contained a statement by one I. Antipov, in which he said:

In many factories the workmen's living quarters are cold, dirty and uncomfortable. At the factory under Director Laiko, factory Chairman Averin, the living quarters are in the condition described above and although they are crowded, hardly any building is done.

\* *Trud*, 29 March 1945.

† *Ibid.* 31 March 1945.

‡ *Ibid.* 3 April 1945.



Antipov concluded:

The factory committee must organize a Socialist competition for the timely preparation of houses for the winter, they must make an effort so as to have workmen present more as the result of improved living conditions.

At the Fourteenth Plenum of the A.U.C.C.T.U., held on 3 December 1945, Kuznetsov, chairman of the A.U.C.C.T.U., speaking on the improvement of workers' living conditions, said:

The People's Commissariat for Construction was also working unsatisfactorily and its plan for dwelling house construction by the Industrial Commissariats had been fulfilled by less than 30 per cent on October 1st.

An item in *Pravda* on 30 June 1944, entitled "Words and Deeds", takes to task Comrade S. Eldarov as head of the first dwelling administration of the Rosteknski rayon, and says that he loves "eye-wash". This article claims:

The houses are in bad condition. On the first Meshchanskei street 80 per cent of the houses had leaking roofs. The water pipes were not repaired. The plaster was falling off the façade and the front doors had not been painted.

*Pravda* of 8 July 1944 criticized conditions in some dormitories of the People's Commissariat for Munitions. The article said: "The building was neglected, the roof was leaking, the windows were broken, the stoves were not working and there were no tables."

*Izvestiya* on 16 June 1944 published a report of conditions in the courtyards of Kalinin:

We visited dozens of courtyards in the town, and everywhere, in the centre and on the outskirts, we saw heaps of rubbish and pools of stagnant water. In small courtyards tucked away between stone houses the cesspools are overflowing. The contents of these cesspools are not carried away. When one is full it is simply covered up and another one dug. The sanitary inspector's department is well aware that this system is being practised.

The Moscow *Bolshevik* of 20 June 1944 said of the Moscow district of Sakolniki:

In the Rusakov housing administration of the Sakolniki district out of 1630 buildings, minor repairs have been completed in only 76.

A leading article in *Pravda* of 10 July 1944 takes certain housing administrations to task for their shortcomings:

The difficulties in the way are not insuperable, and, if they are not overcome, the local organizations are to blame. This is the case in Archangel, Chelyabinsk and Vladivostok, where whole quarters of the town have an orphaned look about them. In Molotov the plan for capital repairs is only 27 per cent complete. In Valdimir it is almost impossible to find a house of which the roof is not leaking. The people would be ready to take part in the repair of the houses, but they require leadership.

In Barrack No. 1 of Zavodostroi, the repairs were badly done and the occupants had to leave after the first downpour of rain . . .

*Trud* of 15 August 1944 says:

At the Textile combine Krasny Perekop, the dormitory for youths is without pillowcases or electric lamps, and the youths spend their evening in darkness. In the dormitory for youths at another factory the water supply is irregular and the question of washing in the morning is a genuine problem.

Correspondents of the Moscow *Bolshevik* went around Moscow streets and their experiences were published in that paper on 14 March 1944. From the Zheleznodorozhni district they reported:

In the backyard of the house there is a rubbish dump where refuse from the kitchen mixes with the thawing snow. Under pressure of this rotten mass the yard fence threatens to collapse. A stream of dark liquid oozes out into the street. Turn around and you will see the same picture in the yard of the opposite house.

This condition of affairs, published as it is, would probably give a stranger to Moscow the impression that these are isolated cases. This is not so by any means. During the three winter periods I spent in Moscow not once did I see anything done with household refuse other than to dump it into the courtyard as described by these reporters. Similar conditions to those described can be found in any part of Moscow all through the winter until the thaw is complete, when workers are organized into cleaning squads for the whole city. This cleaning is done voluntarily at week-ends or on days off. Even in summer there is no such thing as garbage collecting as we in Australia know it. The people throw their household refuse either on to a common heap in the courtyard or into a large bin, which is emptied during one of the periodical cleaning campaigns organized by local Trade Union authorities.

On 4 August 1944 Moscow *Bolshevik* published a leading article entitled "Daily Care of the Welfare of the Citizens of Moscow Oblast". It stated:

The total amount of housing room in the oblast is about 8,000,000 square metres. A large number of houses are in bad condition and require thorough or current repairs and there are many cases when the city Soviets do nothing towards repairing them. In Dmitrov, for example, the plan of repairs is fulfilled only to the extent of eighteen per cent. The municipal administration of the oblast is not active in the search for local materials, which are easily found in every city. Not only are the public baths, barbers' shops and hotels in very poor condition, dirty and badly ventilated, but in some cases clients are in danger of being injured by falling masonry.

Criticism of Saratov town officials was made through *Izvestiya* on 5 September 1944 for its failure to repair the dwelling houses for the winter:

It has only spent one half of the 5,000,000 roubles assigned this year for the repair of dwelling houses. The bringing in of fuel for the winter is only just beginning. The inhabitants of the town are not participating on a large scale in repair work.

It is mainly inhabitants of towns or apartment houses who are called on to do repairs—major as well as minor—to housing. In most cases they have to do it all without the aid of tools other than the tommy-axe and band saw, cutting the wood required from roughly sawn timber. I saw a great deal of house repairing in Moscow, and even the official workmen were using rusty second-hand nails. Few, if any, of these town folk are experienced in building construction or repair, and the consequence is that repairs do not last long. I have seen repairs to city buildings in Moscow in which holes where bricks and plaster had fallen away were filled up with plaster. In one instance I saw two women holding a very shaky ladder on the top of which was a young man with a wooden tray of mortar or cement. He would take a handful of cement and throw it on to the spot requiring repairing and then smooth off the job with his hands. I have watched other plasterers throw the plaster from the trowel on to the wall, so that as much plaster fell to waste as went into the job.

*Izvestiya* of 7 October 1944 published an article from a correspondent at Stavropol in which he criticized the municipal authorities of that town for failing to prepare for winter (the Russian winter commences in November). According to him the authorities had provided only 18 per cent of the wood requirements for the winter.

The plan for the repair of the dwelling houses is 71 per cent short of completion, only 4000 square metres of dwelling space have been repaired out of a total of 21,517 square metres foreseen in the plan. The town repair office has only one carpenter, one painter, one plasterer and one stove layer.

Chelyabinsk is one of the largest industrial towns of the U.S.S.R. During the war its population was almost doubled, and today it is about 1,500,000. This town came in for some criticism from *Pravda* on 11 February 1945:

But the living and cultural construction of Chelyabinsk lags greatly behind the industrial development of the city. The plan for construction of living quarters has been fulfilled by no more than 40-50 per cent, and the structures built have been mainly of a temporary type such as barracks and dormitories. The transport position is very bad; in fact, at the beginning of the last year, of 80 tramcars only 8 were being used.

From the town of Vologda comes a protest about housing repairs, published in *Pravda* on 12 April 1945. According to the correspondent, by the plan of the local authorities 74 houses were to



receive capital repairs and several dozen current repairs. He says there were 1200 houses under the supervision of these authorities in need of repair. Neglect by the authorities had led to a position where a considerable number of the houses needed repair.

One other aspect of Soviet housing concerns the material used in brick construction. Frequently I have seen bricks being thrown from a lorry and breaking into fragments which, strangely enough, all go into the building. *Trud* published an article on 7 July 1945 entitled "More Building Materials". It stated: "In recent years, enterprises of the building industry have permitted themselves to ignore questions of quality. The term 'brick of low durability' has even appeared." It then goes on to describe this type of brick as prepared by the Irkstk plant: "One third of which crumbled away during a trip of several kilometres."

At one abandoned brickworks near Moscow I saw what had been large stacks of new bricks now crumbling to dust in the stacks. No doubt this was the reason for abandoning the undertaking.

*Krasnaya Zvezda*, official organ of the Red Army, gives an insight into the proposed house building of future Moscow in an article published on 29 May 1945:

In an interview with the head of the Chief Administration of Military Industrial Construction of the Sovnarkom of the U.S.S.R., A. N. Prokofyev, he states that this administration has built 500,000 square metres of dwelling space during the war. During 1944, the organization built and restored 405 producing shops and over 300,000 square metres of dwelling space. Great attention is being given to the construction of sanatoria and rest homes. In Moscow, some many-storied dwelling houses with fine architecture are being built for generals and officers of the Moscow garrisons. 200 apartments for the Artillery Academy will be built this year, and also in Moscow construction of two 11 storied apartment houses for generals and officers of the garrison is being begun. In the construction of dwelling houses for officer personnel of the Red Army, the chief type of dwelling will be one family 2 and 3 room apartments with maximum conveniences. In order to successfully cope with tasks of restoration and construction of the living fund of the Red Army, the administration is developing a system of enterprises for the manufacture of construction parts and materials.

From this article obviously Red Army generals and officers are to have two- or three-roomed flats fitted with all conveniences for themselves and their families. One also finds the Red Army building section is about to branch out in manufacturing its own housing requirements. Nothing in these two proposals changes very much the existing conditions as far as Red Army officers and their organization are concerned. The Red Army officer of today is one of the most privileged persons in the Soviet. The new two- and three-roomed flats will merely be keeping pace with the officer's requirements.

All Soviet citizens are compelled by law to undergo two years' military training. During this time they are used by the Red Army construction section for house building and many other jobs undertaken by the army. The personnel used in this construction do the work at Red Army pay rates and not at civilian rates. The entry of the Red Army into the manufacturing section indicates a further reduction for them in costs of raw materials. Obviously the factories and plants for production of building materials will be manned by those serving their two years of compulsory military training.

*Trud* of 30 August 1945 began a campaign for better workmanship in house construction with almost a replica of the complaints mentioned by L. M. Kaganovich in 1931. A correspondent from *Trud* visited the Urals and inspected the new housing in that district. He discussed with occupants their complaints, which *Trud* presented in its article:

Expressing their satisfaction with the exterior finish, the planning, the comfort of some houses, the residents indicated also some unsatisfactory things. Is it admissible to rent houses where the flues are out of order? Where the heating stoves in the apartments were placed so they heat the corridor instead of the rooms? Who is the person that took delivery of a house that had no roads leading to it? Is it not shameful that a few months after delivery of a house, doors and window frames shrink and the roof starts to leak? The above mentioned testimonials of the resident workman is a serious accusation on the builders. It is unfortunate that the builders in the Urals do not constitute the exception to the rule. Not long ago in Darnitze, the Ukraine, eight two-storied houses were peopled by families of railway men. After they had moved into their new apartments, they discovered in many rooms there were no handles, no locks or no bolts to the doors, there was no sink in the kitchen and the doors were closed only with the help of nails . . . .

Continuing the survey of house building the article says, in respect of the housing of Stalinsk:

The quality of the houses already built is far from satisfactory. When one slams the door, plaster comes down. The plaster used is without alabaster and the result of it is that the plastering is cracked.

On 1 September 1945 *Trud* published a letter signed by three workers from factory No. 76. They said:

The summer is at its end. Winter is approaching, but in our habitation no preparations for the winter are noticed, though repairs are badly needed. The plastering in the rooms falls down, sand pours through the cracks, the floors on that account are full of rubber, sand clay and chalk. It is known to the municipal workers that the stoves are badly set, they smoke, soon become cold, but this does not bother them—of their repairs nobody cares. Last winter we got wood on rare occasions, it was brought unsawn. We fear the same thing will happen now as wood is not being supplied. The municipal department is careless about the sanitary conditions of our

habitation. This neglect, certainly cannot help keeping our rooms clean. Formerly to all our complaints, the municipal department answered, "Suffer a little longer—we are in a war now." Now that peace is here we want to live in bright clean and warm houses.

Under the heading of "The Price of Sympathy", *Trud* of 29 September 1945 published the following article:

Can promises of repairs substitute the repairs proper? Can words of sympathy stop water from coming through a leaking roof? Comrade Salov, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee of Workers' Deputies of the Kiev rayon of Moscow, has his own views on the subject. On several occasions he visited the flat of citizen Novoselova in House No. 15 on the Sobachya Square, which by several commissions has been condemned as unfit for human habitation. He expressed some sympathy, sighed, promised to allocate other premises, or at least have the old ones repaired.

Comrade Salov is a man of action; he makes numerous notes and writes many resolutions. In spite of all this, Novoselova, her infant and younger brother, a workman, are still living in the dilapidated room. The ceiling of the room finally gave way, and again the rayon organization expresses sympathy with her plight. The Moscow Soviet, to whom the Novoselova complained, gave instructions for the living conditions of the citizen to be improved without delay. After this, Novoselova was met in the rayon Soviet in a most unfriendly manner. Organizations who became interested in her fate received conflicting reports; according to some Novoselova was not entitled to any accommodation; according to others the room she was in was beyond repair.

The matter ended in an unexpected manner. Two men recently appeared in Novoselova's room; they broke down part of the wall and the ceiling, hastily boarded up the gaps, and left. The rain poured in with greater force than ever. The administrator of the house informed the tenant that the repairs had been completed. The latter protested that it was impossible to live in the room. The administrator agreed, but said neither would she die there. The ceiling would not fall on her, and the rains would cease in time. Novoselova has been living under these conditions for over a month. Salov no longer comes to see her. Why should he? The ungrateful citizen will never appreciate his solicitude and attention.

The campaign which began in 1944 for an increase in the birth-rate led to some of the winners of high Motherhood Orders receiving special treatment and privileges as an encouragement to other women to bear more children. One case was given great publicity by *Trud* on 11 November 1945, telling the life story of the Devv family of Moscow. Mrs Devv had reared ten children. Although they were now grown, she insisted on looking after them and made practically all the clothes worn in the house. With grandchildren arriving, the three-roomed flat in which the family had lived so long had become too small, and they were to be moved to a larger apartment. The article did not say how large the new flat would be. That was left to the imagination. But what the article did reveal was that no less than twelve people were cooped up in a three-roomed apartment, to say nothing of the husbands or wives of younger members of the family, now bearing children.



An editorial in *Electric Stations*, no. 9-10 of 1945, reveals that of the planned construction of 211,000 square metres of living space to be built in 1945, only 44,000 had been built by the end of September 1945.

### *Mud Huts*

At the Fourteenth Plenary Session of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, held in Moscow at the end of 1945, the question of living space was discussed. Decisions arrived at were published in *Trud* on 24 January 1946. These decisions were reached on the basis of the report submitted by V. V. Kuznetsov, President of the A.U.C.C.T.U. The decision covered such things as repairs to existing housing; construction of new housing; supplies of building materials; supplies of furniture, "the transfer in the first quarter of 1946 of all workers from mud huts into modern housing", and "the abolition of two-tier berths in dormitories" during the first half of 1946.

Many of these "mud huts" no doubt are to be found in areas which have felt the full impact of war. On the other hand, many of them house Soviet citizens compulsorily transferred from their homes into regions where a new industry or undertaking has been opened up. When this sort of thing happens in the U.S.S.R. the question of housing for workers who are to build these new industries or work on the new project is of little, if any, concern to the authorities. They leave this kind of forced labour to fend for itself as regards housing. The start of the plant or project has number-one priority, and human requirements are only secondary.

Two-tier berths in dormitories, mentioned by Kuznetsov, are attached to accommodation in a plant or undertaking in which boys and girls in the half-yearly labour call up are housed. They are bound by law to remain. In Tsarist days these places would have been regarded as barracks. Since the present regime wishes to convince the workers that Tsarist methods are no longer in use, the term "dormitory" is used. I have unofficially seen into a couple of dormitories that did not have the two-tier system of berths. Conditions made me wonder whether the occupants would not have been better off with the beds arranged two-tier fashion, providing that no more occupants were assigned to the same room space.

Reporting on this matter, Kuznetsov said: "Many Trade Union managers are not showing Bolshevik perseverance in the struggle to overcome faults in the supplying of workers, the repair of their homes and the organization of labour." While this does not appear important to one who has studied the methods of propaganda used in the U.S.S.R. to transfer responsibility, the statement is full of significance. It seeks to place the blame for shortcomings in housing

accommodation on the shoulders of leaders of the Trade Union movement. Similar methods of "passing the buck" are used by the Trade Unions, until the responsibility rests on the shoulders of the workers themselves.

One can trace through almost every meeting of the A.U.C.C.T.U. and the Central Committee of the Communist Party references to the need for better housing, and resolutions purporting to lay the basis for rectification. Like many other such resolutions, they merely put it on record that the State has its citizens' interests at heart. If only a very small percentage of Soviet propaganda regarding living conditions were correct, the standard of living of the Soviet worker would be infinitely higher than it is today.

For years now the Soviet has not published vital or other statistics. Illustration of advancements is made mainly by referring to present statistics as being so much per cent higher than at some other given time. Usually 1913 is used as a base year, which is, of course, a method loaded heavily in favour of the present regime, as it would be in any other country.

The Soviet Union can best be described as a country of plans, propaganda and police. Plans are made; and the propaganda machine begins operations so promptly that plans are presented as completed before they are even started. Secret police assure the propagandists that they do not run any risk of being openly challenged. The red tape and bureaucracy through which all plans must pass would break the heart of a business executive in any other country.

I do not say that the Soviet machine cannot and does not sometimes operate efficiently. In many respects I think it would be most difficult for Governments of other countries to do as much at short notice as is done in the U.S.S.R.—if the order comes from the right quarter.

I have seen bright lawns and gardens spring up almost overnight on blocks of land formerly used as gun emplacements, and bomb damaged buildings removed just as swiftly. I have known performances at the Bolshoi Theatre to be cancelled in the morning and players for a different show brought from distant parts of the U.S.S.R. to stage a special performance at the theatre the same night. I have also seen thousands of Red Army men and women sent on to the principal streets of Moscow within the space of a few hours, to deal with a particularly heavy snow-storm. On the other hand, I know of workmen going to renovate a house in December 1944, working continuously in squads of 40 to 60 throughout 1945, and still on the job when I left Moscow in February 1946, with months of work still ahead of them.

The references to the state of housing which I have quoted from the Soviet Press gives a picture of how housing has deteriorated

since the Revolution. While it is very dangerous for a Soviet citizen to have a foreigner visit his home, I have been to a worker's rooms and seen for myself conditions under which he lives. I have also managed to see quite a lot from the exterior of thousands of workers' rooms in Moscow during long walks.

Each apartment house has its committee, giving its chairman a full-time job. It is the chairman's responsibility, within his power and limitations, to see to the necessary repairs; but one would never know there was a house committee chairman, judging from the state of the houses. The quotations I have used could be multiplied time out of number, all over Moscow. War certainly put a stop to many repairs that could otherwise have been carried out, but had the buildings, before the war, received even half the attention required, the position would have been much better today.

I have seen apartment houses in Moscow with floors below street level flooded out in wet weather and abandoned by the tenants, leaving the water to remain and freeze into solid ice in winter, to thaw again with the coming of spring. Some of these places are not far from the Kremlin, others are in the outer suburbs. During the whole time I was in Moscow no attempt was made to drain and restore them as living quarters.

Many visitors to Moscow do not see these things. Almost every minute of a visitor's time is occupied with hospitality from the authorities. When a foreigner does go about, it is generally through the principal streets of Moscow—a thin façade covering the real conditions at their rear—or he speeds through other streets in fast moving cars, his attention occupied the while by conversation with his guides.

In the villages the housing is quite different. Here one finds the typical Russian peasant log cottage built by the peasants themselves. This generally consists of one or two fairly large rooms, with a large Russian stove—on top of which the master of the house sleeps. Then there is a lean-to building attached to the cottage to house throughout the long winter months whatever stock—cow, goat, pig or some fowls—the peasant may own. As far as I could ascertain, cottages are the individual private property of the peasants, who are allowed a plot of land each from the collective farms on which they may grow vegetables for their own use.

Since the peasants are now practically all members of the collective farm system, the continued right to use that land, as I have said, depends entirely on continued membership of the farm. If a peasant, for some reason, leaves or is expelled from the collective farm, then he loses his plot of ground, together with his right to make any purchases or to sell any of his commodities through the collective organization. Expulsion or termination of membership leaves him with rights only to the interior of his



cottage. That does not give him any means of livelihood and he is therefore forced to quit, whether he wishes to or not. Thus the peasant is economically bound to abide by discipline as much as, if not more than, the worker who lives in a room belonging to his place of employment. Although the peasant owns his own cottage he has billeted on him other farm workers who have no cottages of their own. The peasant comes to a private arrangement with his lodger as to the rent to be paid for the right to share the cottage or part of it.

### *Leningrad*

Leningrad is a much younger city than Moscow, but no Australian ignorant of its history would accept it as being only fifty years older than Sydney. Leningrad suffered heavily during the war, but not to the extent generally believed by people who have not seen the city since the lifting of the German seige or who are not conversant with its surroundings. Reading of the destruction of Leningrad suburbs, people are inclined to regard them as they would the suburbs of cities such as our own. Actually there is no comparison between them on a geographical basis. Gatchina, Pushkina, and Peteroff, the three principal Leningrad suburbs which suffered under the German attack, are some twenty miles out of Leningrad and one reaches them after traversing vast open spaces. I did not see Pushkina, but I did go to Gatchina and to Peteroff, where palaces of Tsarist days have been converted into museums by the Soviet. Destruction in the museums was terrific. According to our hosts, the valuable collection of furniture, except a few pieces too heavy to remove, had been safely evacuated from Peteroff before the Germans arrived; but this was not the case with the palace at Gatchina, where the Germans came in too quickly for anything to be saved from the building. Valuable chandeliers and other treasures of the former Royal household, left behind by the Germans but damaged in the battle for the recovery of Gatchina, could be seen lying about at the time of my visit.

On the other side of Leningrad among the industrial plants and homes damage had also been almost total. In the city of Leningrad itself, while there did not appear to be a single building that had completely escaped harm, the damage would not have exceeded 10 per cent of the city proper. Fortunately all the old historical places escaped with little, if any, destruction, one shell only falling on the Winter Palace and then not doing much harm.

I do not write this to discredit the heroic defence of Leningrad. When war first broke out most of Leningrad's large industrial undertakings, together with a large percentage of its population, were evacuated into the Urals. Those left to carry on the defence suffered in an almost incredible way. I have seen the bread ration

on which the people had to live for a considerable time, also the ingredients that went to make up that bread, and I do not think any Australian could have existed on it, let alone carry on the fight they did throughout the siege.

The lowest ration was 250 grammes a day for heavy workers and 150 grammes a day for other workers. At one time, all lighting, transport, heating and water services of the city were disorganized. Inhabitants had to break ice on the river Neva to draw water. One who lived through that dreadful period told me that people at one time were dropping dead in the streets through cold and starvation. They were so numerous that all that could be done was to dump them into heaps, to be carried to the outskirts of the city for burial after dark.

To my mind, the fierce determination of Leningrad's people to hold their city at all costs was due to the leadership of the Communist Party. By their fanatical devotion to the Party and to the name of Lenin, they were inspired to great heights bordering on mass suicide. It is significant that the two cities of the U.S.S.R. which staged such an heroic defence at such appalling cost in human lives were Leningrad and Stalingrad, the latter in particular, for though it was completely destroyed the stubborn defence of the city went on in its ruins. Nowhere else in the U.S.S.R. were such great sacrifices made.

On my first visit to Leningrad, our hosts had a full itinerary arranged for us. They were with us even for breakfast, so I had little opportunity to make any study of housing conditions. On two other occasions I was in Leningrad minus hosts, so I did get an opportunity of seeing other than show places. What I saw led me to believe that, owing to large scale evacuation during the war, living conditions were not so crowded as in Moscow. And many of the evacuees did not return. The condition of the buildings, apart from war damage, was that of continued neglect, with all the faults so evident in Moscow.

### *"Baku Is Very Bad"*

Baku, another large city where I spent a few days, is an oil city on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Its population is a mixture of Asiatics and Europeans, and the poverty of its people is written on the face of almost every citizen one meets. Beggars here are more prolific than in Moscow. Old men and women dressed in filthy rags, and young women grown old with poverty, with small babies at their breasts, are frequently encountered begging alms.

Baku city proper belongs to the past. It was a fortress city around which a newer Baku has grown. This old fortress city is merely a rabbit warren with streets a few feet wide, and dark narrow passage-ways running off at short intervals, down which the

inhabitants disappear going to and from their homes. It does not appear that any attempt has been made, for a long time even before the Revolution, to do anything in the way of repairs to this section. Its population is about one million. Living conditions are far worse than I have seen anywhere else in the world. General clothing, if one can call it such, is simply dirty, tattered rags; for footwear one sees old bags, rags, and straw. There are some Soviet constructed apartment houses, but they are all jerry-built and constitute only a small percentage of housing accommodation. The rest is made up of mud or stone huts and shacks, and old disused barges and other vessels on the waterfront, long since out of commission. The lavatories on these old boats are a series of doorless huts on the rapidly rotting old piers. Holes are cut into the flooring, and these serve men and women alike. Along the sea front are ramshackle houses such as I have never seen before. I could not believe it possible for human beings to live in them without contracting disease.

In the centre of the city are some very nice old Tsarist buildings that have weathered the storm fairly well. These are all in use for administration offices. Occasionally one sees neatly dressed men and women, but these are so few and far between that they stand out conspicuously against the sordidness and poverty of the general population.

The opportunity for me to inspect Baku was unexpected, and one given to few foreigners in the U.S.S.R. Generally, when a stop has to be made overnight at Baku, aeroplane passengers arrive from the airport late in the afternoon and leave again early the following morning, and therefore get but a passing glimpse of Baku's conditions. At other times the planes do not put down at Baku in flying to and from Moscow.

The conditions in Baku are such that on my way into the city from the airport I heard a fellow traveller, a Russian, remark that "the surroundings are not pleasant". On the return journey to the airport another Soviet passenger referred to the state of the city by saying, "Baku is very bad". Certainly not during any part of my travels did I see such mass poverty, dirt, and degradation.

### *A Toast To Stalin*

To crown all this squalor there stands on a hill overlooking the city a gigantic statute of Stalin. It can be seen from almost every part of Baku.

The statue reminded me of a toast proposed at a Russian party by a Russian military officer, who said: "Let us drink to Marshal Stalin, the man who has made Russia what she is today."



## CHAPTER XVII

### STOP PRESS

#### *Rations*

As this book was going to the publisher, confirmation of my anticipation of the Soviet's increasing prices of foodstuffs with the abolition of rationing has come into my possession.

The following is a complete translation of an Order of the Soviet Council of Ministers as it appeared in *Pravda* on Monday, 16 September 1946:

#### IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF U.S.S.R.

With the aim of preparing conditions for the abolition of the card system in 1947 and the introduction of prices, the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. found it necessary to take measures to level the high commercial and low card system prices, so that when the time comes for the abolition of the card system and commercial prices, it will be possible to announce new food prices as single State prices.

Considering the hardships of low and medium paid workers and employees in connection with the increase of food prices, the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. proposes to compensate the workers and employees whose wages do not exceed 900 roubles per month, by increasing their wages as follows: Up to 300 roubles per month an increase of 110 roubles; Up to 500 roubles—100 roubles per month; Up to 700—90 roubles; Up to 900—80 roubles per month; *non-working dependants* and families of servicemen receiving monetary assistance and those on *State support*—60 roubles per month; students receiving a stipend, higher educational institutions—80 roubles per month; technical schools—60 roubles per month.

The above-mentioned changes in pay, as in product stores and commercial stores, comes into force as from 16th September, 1946.

As the Order reads, from the first paragraph one learns that a measure is to be implemented to level the prices prevailing in the commercial shops against those charged on the ration card. The wording of the second paragraph of the Order gives one the impression that the extra cost involved by the worker owing to this levelling process is to be met by increase in wage rates, ranging from 60 to 100 roubles per month; but this has not been the case in actual practice.

The increase in wage rates given to Soviet workers under this Order, while better than nothing, is totally inadequate to meet the higher prices of the rationed goods. On the other hand, the levelling

measure does reduce the cost of living of that privileged section of the Soviet community which shops in commercial stores.

How the increase in prices of food bought with the worker's ration card affects him can be seen from the following comparison of his ration card food:

#### COST OF FULL RATION SUPPLY FOR A MONTH

<i>Commodity</i>	<i>Prices to 16 September 1946</i>	<i>Prices after 16 September 1946</i>
	<i>(Roubles)</i>	<i>(Roubles)</i>
Bread	58·52	169·40
Meat	30·80	74·80
Fats	8·40	19·80
Cereals	13·00	38·00
Sugar	4·95	13·50
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>115·67</b>	<b>315·50</b>

Here it will be seen that, while the wage increase is limited to a maximum amount of 100 roubles, the actual increase in the prices of rationed goods to the second category worker, as quoted above, amounts to 199·83 roubles per month, or over 170 per cent increase.

This increase in wage rates is but a sop to be used by Party propagandists and Soviet Trade Union officials to endeavour to convince the worker of the State's consideration for his welfare.

#### *The Rouble*

The latest Soviet decree (14 December 1947) revalues the rouble according to who possesses it and where it is at the time of the issuing of the decree.

To any person who has lived in the U.S.S.R. this decree is not altogether surprising, nor is the method of revaluing the rouble any great surprise; nevertheless, it must have come as a great shock to Soviet citizens who for years have been told that the Soviet rouble was the most stable currency in the world.

It is not necessary to live long in Russia to realize that Soviet banking experts have much to learn in the matter of currency and it is evident that inflation has long been a feature of Soviet economy. I recall shortly after my arrival in Moscow being one of a party of six having dinner in the only restaurant then operating in Moscow. The meal was quite a good one of five courses with a moderate quantity of wines. The party finished and the two hosts commenced

counting out roubles to pay the attendant. The total cost of that meal for six was 3600 roubles, which, converted to English pounds at our diplomatic rate of exchange, represented a cost of £75. Naturally I protested against my two friends having to meet the whole cost of the function, and I suggested that our party share the cost. This they would not entertain and one of them, turning to me, said, "There is nothing to be worried about. I sold an old suit of mine today for 4000 roubles".

On another occasion I intended giving a buffet party to 100 guests in my residence in Moscow, but not having the facilities to cater for such a large number I sought to have the catering done by Intourist (which is the Soviet organization for catering) and asked for a quote from them. The quote submitted to me for the 100 guests by Intourist was the equivalent of £1000.

The figures I have quoted elsewhere in this book as to cost of commodities should in themselves be sufficient indication that there was a fairly high degree of inflation operating in the U.S.S.R.; but the curious feature about the inflation was the fact that there were no rouble notes (and the rouble currency is all notes) in circulation bearing a printing date later than 1938.

One could draw large amounts (as I have done) in roubles direct from the Soviet Bank. The notes were brand new, with the Bank band still intact, but the date was never later than 1938. This fact I discovered early during my stay in the U.S.S.R. when collecting, for souvenir purposes, a full range of Soviet currency. Noticing no note dated later than 1938 I asked a number of my friends to watch for any note bearing a later date; but they all came to the conclusion that there were no notes dated later than 1938, although it was obvious that many millions of notes had been printed since then. To me it appeared obvious that those responsible for the issuing of Soviet currency were intent on proving the Soviet claim to the stability of the rouble by the continuous use of the 1938 printing block.

Another feature of the Soviet rouble was the fact that under Soviet law it was illegal to take the rouble beyond the borders of the Soviet State and Soviet customs authorities are most efficient in checking people coming in or going out of the U.S.S.R. No foreigner within the U.S.S.R. would want to take the rouble out of the country with him because it has no exchange value beyond the borders of the U.S.S.R. At the same time, it was common knowledge to foreigners in Moscow that the rouble, rated at 21 to the English pound within the U.S.S.R., could be bought quite easily in Teheran and other bordering cities of the U.S.S.R. at 120 to the English pound. It was quite obvious that this fairly large scale black marketing of the Soviet rouble beyond the borders of the U.S.S.R. was being carried out by direct agents of the Soviet



Government as an additional means of raising foreign exchange. The fact that a foreigner bought roubles on this black market would be known to Soviet authorities who no doubt subscribed to the view that the foreigner coming into the U.S.S.R. would be more likely to pay the fantastic prices asked for what might be regarded as souvenirs if they bought their roubles cheaply than they would if required to pay at the official rate. At all times foreign exchange, especially dollars and English credit, has been of top rank importance to the Soviet authorities.

A Soviet publication entitled *Planned Economy*, no. 1 of 1945, under the heading of "The Circulation of Currency in Socialist Economy", contains a lengthy article by one Z. Atlas in which he sets out to explain the functions and methods of Soviet currency. Atlas says:

The State Bank draws up a cash plan based on the volume of receipts and expenses established by the plan of national economy. The cash plan takes into consideration the whole volume of payments in cash, that is the turnover of currency as a means of payment and purchases, wages cash returns of the retail trade, payment for the transport service, connections, municipal services etc., payments for State Loans, taxes, etc.

Reading the article further one finds Atlas going into great detail in explaining the circulation of the rouble:

Every rouble which is issued is balanced by some value in goods, so that the currency issued is backed by goods to the extent of 100% and the mass of currency in circulation corresponds to the requirements of the trade circulation.

Atlas concludes his article by stating:

A stable war economy demands a stable currency which is the instrument or organization and planning of that economy. The fall and stabilization of market prices which are an effect of the actual stabilization of currency are an important achievement of our economists and financial policy under war conditions.

Taking the foregoing quotations from what could be regarded as an authoritative statement on Soviet finance, there does not appear to be any justification for the alteration of the rouble as prescribed in the latest decree. If the circulation and control of Soviet currency were half as stable as Comrade Atlas would have his readers believe in 1945, then something extraordinary must have happened between then and 1947 to undermine the State planning of Socialist economy.

The plain fact is that Atlas was attempting to bolster up a rouble that had long since lost its value, and now that Stalin wishes to put the rouble on a more stable basis this decree changing the value of the existing rouble has been promulgated. Like most

Soviet decrees this one throws the heaviest burden upon the great mass of Soviet workers and peasants.

The irony of the changed value of the rouble is the fact that the Communist parties of other countries are hailing the decree as a Socialist triumph (*vide* *Sydney Tribune* of 17 December 1947). Of course great emphasis is placed by them on the fact that rationing has been abolished with the coming into effect of the decree. Were like measures devaluating the currency of that country to be adopted in any capitalist country there is not the slightest doubt that the members of the Communist Party to a man would roundly condemn such a measure as one which "slogs the worker at the expense of the rich".

The fact that rationing has been abolished in the U.S.S.R. and that there has been a lowering of food prices under the decree is, however, a horse of quite a different colour to that painted by Stalin's friends. The reduction that has taken place in prices is merely a reduction on former prices as charged in commercial shops and the complete abolition of the former rationed goods price (as I anticipated would happen). Goods now off the ration are sold at prices which, while lower than former commercial shop prices, are higher than the former prices of goods purchased on the ration card.

The changes made in the currency under the decree are of different application and all roubles are affected.

Firstly, the deposits in Soviet Banks are to be revalued according to the following principles:

1. Deposits up to 3000 roubles will be revalued at 3000 new roubles.

2. Deposits between 3000 and 10,000 roubles will be converted to new rouble value by converting the first 3000 roubles at nominal value and the balance at the rate of three old roubles to two new roubles.

3. Deposits above 10,000 roubles will be revalued by converting the first 3000 at nominal value, the next 7000 roubles at the rate of three old to two new and all over the 10,000 roubles at the rate of two old to one new rouble.

Secondly, all Soviet loans are to be amalgamated into the one loan fund and those who have subscribed are to have their subscriptions revalued on the basis of one rouble in this amalgamated loan to each three roubles held in other loans.

Thirdly, the money belonging to co-operatives and collective farms is to be exchanged by five old roubles for four new roubles.

Fourthly, all roubles in circulation at the date of the issuing of the decree will lose their value other than for the purpose of exchanging into new roubles, and the rate of conversion in this case is ten old for one new rouble.

To attempt to estimate the total amount the State will confis-

cate from the Soviet people by this measure would be a colossal task and one which probably no person outside the higher inner circles of the Kremlin could do with any degree of accuracy. However, it does not require the assistance of a financial or mathematical expert to allow one to see the class distinction in this legislation and its effects upon the common people of the U.S.S.R., who undoubtedly will be the greatest sufferers. It is significant that the decree fixes different conversion rates for the rouble under which the members of the higher strata of Soviet society are called upon to make a much smaller sacrifice than are the workers and peasants. The fact that the decree provides that the first 3000 roubles and under deposited in the banks is to be converted at their nominal value does not mean a concession to the workers or peasants, for very few of these two classes of Soviet society would have bank deposits.

*Izvestiya* of 28 January 1945 published an article under the heading "The Flow of Deposits to Savings Banks is Growing", in which the Head of the Chief Administration of Savings Banks and a member of the Board of the People's Commissariat of Finance is credited with stating that the total deposits had reached 7 billion roubles and that there were over 17 million people with savings bank books. Since the population of the U.S.S.R. stood somewhere around the 200 million mark in 1935, 17 million people are obviously but a small percentage of the population. On the other hand, the vast sums of money invested in Soviet loans, as mentioned elsewhere, come mainly from the hard-earned money of the common people of the Soviet Union. This money, forced from the pay envelopes of Soviet workers under the specious name of "voluntary loans"—from the date of the first loan for the First Five Year Plan (1928) up to the present time—is now being reduced in value by no less than  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent.

The money of the co-operatives and collective farms is the money reserved for social services, development, and cultural work, after all State obligations have been met from the funds at the disposal of these organizations; and the reduction in the value of their rouble holdings can only mean less opportunity to provide, or extend, social services for their members.

For the peasantry and workers in general the decree provides a Christmas box in reverse, for they are to lose no less than nine out of every ten roubles which they hold. Since the ordinary Soviet citizen looks forward to the Christmas period as the time in which efforts must be made to provide presents for children and special foodstuffs, their cash savings for this purpose have received a cruel jolt.

A more comprehensive grasp of the real effects of this Soviet



monetary change can be gained from the following table showing how the rates of conversion from old to new rouble will operate:

## BANK DEPOSITS

<i>Roubles in Bank at 14 December 1947</i>	<i>Value of Deposit at 15 December 1947</i>	<i>Loss to Depositor</i>	<i>Percentage of Savings Confiscated per cent</i>
3000	3000	Nil	Nil
6000	5000	1000	16·6
9000	7000	2000	22·2
10000	7666	2334	23·34
12000	8666	3334	27·8
16000	10666	5334	33½

## LOANS

900	300	600	33½
1200	400	800	33½
1500	500	1000	33½
1800	600	1200	33½
6000	2000	4000	33½
9000	3000	6000	33½
12000	4000	8000	33½

## CASH IN HAND

100	10	90	90
300	30	270	90
500	50	450	90
700	70	650	90
900	90	810	90
1000	100	900	90
3000	300	2700	90
6000	600	5400	90
9000	900	8100	90
12000	1200	11800	90

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J. J. MALONEY

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